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Print-Media Strategies and Internet Fan Tactics: Articulating Scott Gomez, an Emerging Hero, Across the Popular Sport Imaginary

by

Debra Ann Capon

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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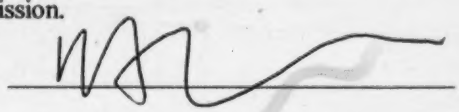

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ABSTRACT

My project reads intertexually across several print-media articles and fan-produced websites concerning a Colombian-Mexican-American hockey player, Scott Gomez. I frame Gomez as an athlete hero within a formation that I term the popular sport imaginary. Arguably, the popular sport imaginary is shaped by the artefacts and representational strategies of the mass media, yet, drawing on Jenkins' (1992) and de Certeau's (1984) insights, is also tactically *re*-made by fans through their poaching practices.

Gomez is variously configured across the texts – for example, as a migrant worker, a Hispanic star, and object of fan pleasure. This underscores that different people make Gomez powerfully meaningful, through a number of different discourses and practices, across different contexts. Hall's (1980, 1985, and 1986a/b) concept of articulation is used as a tool to appreciate these meaning-making processes. This project positions itself to cultural, postcolonial and Chicana/o studies, and draws on insights from literary and poststructuralist theory.

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CHAPTER ONE : INTRODUCTION

> In part, we give objects, people and events meaning by the frameworks of interpretation which we bring to them. In part, we give things meaning by how we use them, or integrate them into our everyday practices ....In part, we give things meaning by how we *represent* them – the words we use about them, the stories we tell about them, the images of them we produced, the emotions we associate with them, the ways we classify and conceptualize them, the values we place on them. (Hall, 1997a, p. 3, original emphasis)

The subject of this project is a hockey player, Scott Gomez. However, I am not interested in writing Gomez's autobiography, although I detail a number of representations publicised about him. Rather, my interest is in how Gomez is strategically and tactically produced and circulated across a number of print-media and fan texts, in the form of two websites. Conceivably my project, through examining some Internet fan texts of Gomez, interrupts a number of notable contemporary academic commentaries on sport heroes and celebrities that have neglected fans, together with their cultural practices and artefacts (for example: Andrews, 1996a/b; Holt, Mangan, and Lafranchi, 1996; Jackson, 1998; Kennedy, 2000; and Whannel, 1992, 1999). My desire to read fan production, that is to look at what people "do" with Gomez (after de Certeau, 1984 and Jenkins, 1992), is fuelled by my overall commitment to examine popular culture. By "doing", I refer to the art of "making over" that de Certeau's (1984) productive readers of text perform.

However, the "doing" of Gomez by fans remains cognisant with the fact that the mass media enjoys cultural authority over the production and circulation of representations (Denzin, 1996; Giroux, 1994). In de Certeau's (1984) language, whilst the fans or audiences offer within their uses of Gomez, a kind of hidden secondary production, the mass media, as part of the dominant economic order, retain the primary production or dissemination of Gomez. In order to make events meaningful for mass audiences, Miller (1998) argues that the media as part of post-industrial culture provides its audiences with limited cases and sensationalised stories, which draw on a particular repertoire of codes, rules, conventions and discourses. Sport journalism, and the American media in particular, is fully implicated in this cultural-economic authority.

Sports journalism, as Wenner (1995) points out, relies on the formulaic narrative construction of winners or losers, villains or heroes, "good guys and bad guys", and "journalistic convention, the need to manufacture interesting and simple stories, demands this" (p. 228). Moreover, Whannel (1992, 1998) points out that the sports media organisations continually use the hero as a key strategy to win and capture audiences. Alongside the simplistic narrative constructions adopted by the media is the more general pervasive strategic practice of stereotyping. Such strategies are not evenly distributed among different social groups. As Wenner (1995) points out black athletes seem particularly susceptible to stereotypical representation by the predominantly white sports journalists of the American media. Clearly, the same point could be made about female athletes. If sport journalists are usually white, they also tend to be men. Gomez, who is a Colombian-Mexican-American, is not immune from such stereotyping practices.

If, as academic sport commentators (including: Boyle and Haynes, 2000; Kinkema and Harris, 1998; Rowe, 1999; Wenner, 1998) argue, our experience and knowledge of sport, heroes and villains are produced through the mass media, then how and by what means do audiences question or reproduce the mediated productions on offer? Eco (1986) contends even our everyday chatter or gossip about sport is enabled by media coverage. To consider this question my framework involves understanding fans as tactically operating *within* rather than outside certain power relations. Rather than just pessimistically considering audience reception, Kellner (1995) points out the media (and I would argue the sports media) in a contradictory manner not only reproduces prevailing notions of power, but also provides the resources for the construction of new identities and empowerment. Hence, not all mass media production is repressively bad. Neither does my project seek to posit that all fan production is progressively good. Rather I seek to trace the points of overlap and separation between fan and media representations of Scott Gomez. By doing so, my project aims to make intelligible the antagonistic network of "strategies and tactics" (Foucault, 1980, p. 114) across cultural formations.

The relationship between the mass media representations of sport[1] and fan reception is considered within a cultural formation I term the "Popular Sport Imaginary" (PSI). Whilst undeniably contoured by the artefacts and representational strategies of the mass media, the PSI, drawing on the work of Jenkins (1992) and de Certeau (1984), is also in-

formed by the tactical practices of fans. I use the word imaginary to impress the idealisation that the media, audiences and arguably physical educators attach to the realm of sport. For example, two pervasive ways sport is popularly imagined is that it is a "pure", de-politicised arena, and secondly, that moral character is built on the playing fields. Imaginary is used to evoke, after Althusser (1969), that such relations constitute how people live their "real" conditions of existence. Given the space and time constraints of a Master's thesis, my project only looks at only two points of articulation within the popular sport imaginary, that is fan reception via two Internet websites, and print-media representations. However, this imaginary is also contoured through and circulated by other mass media sources including TV, radio and advertising, together with certain institutions, like sport governing bodies and professional league organisations, across a number of different locations. I now turn to consider Scott Gomez.

1.1 Scott Gomez

The subject of my research is Scott Gomez. Born in Alaska, Gomez plays in the National Hockey League (NHL) for the New Jersey Devils.[2] In playing, watching, and dreaming hockey, I felt compelled to write my hero thesis through hockey. From living in England, where hockey remains a minor sport with regards to both participation and media coverage, I remain overwhelmed, both delighted and critical of how hockey in Canada is a national obsession. Of course, in writing my project in Canada, but speaking to an American hockey player, I am in danger of upsetting Canadian hockey purists who fear the Americanization of the NHL (as noted by Gruneau and Whitson, 1993). Hence, I see myself as both an outsider/insider with regards to hockey culture in Canada.

I chose to study Scott Gomez because in his inaugural NHL season (1999-2000) he was heralded as a new or emerging athlete hero by the American media. I use "emerging" here to evoke Williams' (1977) thesis on the dominant, residual, and emergent with regards to the complexity of cultural processes. With specific respect to the emergent, Williams (1977) indicates: "first, that new meanings and values, new practices, new relationships are continually being created" (p. 123). Although, Williams (1977) further advises that it remains difficult to judge whether the emergent is a new phase of the domi-

nant culture or one that is oppositional to it. In an attempt to gage Gomez's emergent status, I ask: does Gomez's presence indicate any opposition to dominant culture/s? Gomez's status as a new and insignificant hero is precisely that which captures my interest. Insignificance here relates to both low media exposure, and the fact that Gomez is not clearly identified to a lucrative advertising contract. Although, the amount of media coverage Gomez does enjoy is unusual for a rookie, and it remains the media interest in him that enables his construction as a hero or celebrity. Research on heroes and celebrities in sport to date focus on overexposed media darlings, especially Michael Jordan (see for example: Andrews, 1996a/b; Cole, 1996; Dyson, 1993; McDonald, 1996).

The rising hero status of Scott Gomez is indicated by his inclusion in Sports Illustrated (1999) *"Master list: The 50 greatest sport figures of the century from each of the 50 states"* (p. 72). Gomez's twenty-first placing for Alaska is quite a feat, given at the time he had been playing in the NHL for less than a full season when this list went to press. Yet in his rookie season Gomez made headlines not only due to his impressive play making and scoring abilities, but also because he is the first "Latino" or "Hispanic"[3] player to make the NHL. In addition, although not as widely publicised as the latter, Scott Gomez is the first Alaskan to play in the NHL.[4] By the end of Gomez's first NHL season (1999-2000), his "greatest" status was further secured by the fact he won the Rookie of the Year award (Calder Trophy), played (as the youngest player ever) in the All-star game (for North America) and his team, the NJ Devils, won the Stanley Cup.

Since Scott Gomez's entry into the NHL, there has been a steady increase in media attention, celebrating his "emerging" hero status. More consistently, however, a variety of fan websites circulate Scott across the Internet. My story of an emerging athlete hero thus engages with both traditional print-media texts (newspapers and magazines) and fan-constructed virtual texts.[5] In so doing, and in following Jamieson's (1998) analysis, I decode both dominant and non-dominant popular texts of Scott Gomez.[6] In reading representations of a "Latino American" athlete within the US media I also engage, as noted by Davis and Harris (1998), in an area that has received very limited research attention.

1.2 Concerns and Orientating Themes

Whist this project is about Scott Gomez, my concerns are about more than that. My means to read the representations of Gomez engage with some of the contemporary debates about cultural theory and analysis. Like Bennett and Woolacott's (1987) cultural studies' examination of James Bond, I do not abstractly seek to raid wholly from the existing theoretical traditions of Marxism, psychoanalysis or semiotics and so on. Instead, more eclectically, my project has two particular concerns, which inform the way in which I approach a number of questions.

The first concern is the relationship between representation, power and discourse. In turn, I am also interested in how this relationship informs the concept culture. As Bennett and Woolacott (1987) point out, traditional cultural studies analysis has relied upon the deterministic application of ideology as a means to address how the culture industries transmit to "the masses" (p. 2). Increasingly however, as Bennett and Woolacott (1987) stress, such analyses are "recognised as unacceptable" (p. 3). In extension to this debate, my project looks to the Foucaultian concept of discourse in order address the issue of power that informs the construction and circulation of the Gomez representations.

My means to address such debates is indebted to Hall's (1997a/b/c) discussion on representation and culture. Hall's (1997a/b) socio-constructionist understanding of representation, through considering its poetics and politics, argues that culture is a process or set of practices that relies on its participants "making sense" of the world. Hall's emphasis on participants implicitly evokes Kellner's (1995) argument that acknowledges culture in its broadest and contradictory sense as: "a form of participatory activity, in which people create their societies and identities. Culture shapes individuals, drawing out and cultivating their potentialities for speech, action, and creativity" (p. 2). By noticing both the political and poetical work of representation, Hall (1997a/b/c) is implying a critical examination, or interruption to culture.

Donald and Rattansi (1992) point out that examining the "changing nexus between representation, discourse and power" demands a "critical return to the concept *culture*" (p. 1, original emphasis). The study of culture within the past few decades, as Donald and Rattansi (1992) argue, has been fundamentally transformed. So much so, it makes it difficult to accept culture as a hermetically sealed "body of contents, customs and tradi-

tions" (Donald and Rattansi, 1992, p. 1). Influential forces in this transformation include: Saussurian semiotics, Althusserian and various marxist[7] (neo-and post-) approaches to ideology, Lacanian psychoanalysis and its account of subjectivity, the tradition of British cultural studies (key figures include Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall), various feminisms, together with Foucault's analysis of discourse and power (Donald and Rattansi, 1992, p. 1). Taking up a few of these influences, firstly, British cultural studies began to question culture from a class perspective, valorising popular or working-class culture, as opposed to retaining all that is glorious and civilised as a defining feature of "culture" (traceable back to the pioneering work of Williams, 1961 and Thompson, 1968). Yet, as I outline, both Said's (1995) *Orientalism* and Chow's (1998) postcolonial concerns further interrupt ethnocentric notions of culture with the question: just who's culture are "we" talking about? Both Said (1995) and Chow (1998) rely on notions of culture informed by Foucault. Their arguments imply that culture is not just "a way of life", but a way of life that refers to certain "processes, categories and knowledges through which communities are defined" (Donald and Rattansi, 1992, p. 4).

Dyer (1977) further argues that there is a political urgency, made apparent by the social and political movements of the Sixties and Seventies, for understanding the articulation between representation and culture. Dyer (1977) continues that:

> The political changes of different groups in society – powerful or weak, central or marginal – are crucially affected by how they are represented, whether in legal and parliamentary discourse, in educational practices, or in the arts. The mass media in particular have a crucial role to play, because they are a centralised source of definitions of what people are like in any given society. How a particular group is represented determines in a very real sense what it can do in society. (p. 43)

Like Hall (1997a), Dyer (1993) also remarks that the word representation speaks volumes, because it marks the continual *re*-presentation of groups in "cultural forms": how images are considered as representative of that group, how groups are very much spoken for and on behalf of (even when they speak for themselves or not). Concomitantly, the idea of representation also addresses how others view members of a group, their rights and place, and ultimately others who authorize "that place and those rights" (Dyer, 1993, p. 1). The privilege of *eye epistemology*[8] is at play here; as Dyer (1993) continues:

"[h]ow we are seen determines in part how we are treated; how we treat others is based on how we see them; such seeing comes from representation" (p. 1). Dyer's (1977;1993) arguments underline that representation materially influences people's everyday lives.

My critical approach to culture does not deny that culture is not also participatory or as Kellner (1995) highlights where people construct their identities, and as Alasuutari (1995) stresses, where people productively live their everyday lives. With reference to the latter, Hall's (1977) earlier musings on culture point out that although the media may disseminate a number of dominant discourses about a culture, in a sense defining that culture, lived experience may well entail that individuals depart from the frame constructed by the dominant media. Part of my reasoning in looking at the fan culture, is to gage whether it departs from or reproduces the media representations of Scott. Yet, my critical approach remains cognisant that culture, high/low, West/the rest, explicitly evokes representational practices that include as well as exclude across a number of registers.

Related to my first set of interests, my second ones revolve around the concept of articulation. Hall's (1980, 1985, and 1986a/b) development of this concept with specific application to studying culture, points out that how the production of cultural meaning relies on an arbitrary, in the sense of no guaranteed, fixing between and within discourses, practices and structures. As Grossberg (1996) points out, Hall's fractured totality of articulation opens up how we think about the subject and social-cultural formations, as:

> [a]rticulation is the production of identity on top of differences, of unities out of fragments, of structures across practices. Articulation links this practice to that effect, this text to that meaning, this meaning to that reality, this experience to those politics. And these links are themselves articulated into larger structures, etc. (p. 154)

As emphasised within my overview of articulation and within my analysis of the Gomez representations, Hall's development of articulation allows researchers, and me more specifically, to consider that individuals are both subordinate and dominant across different registers (Slack and Whitt, 1992). If, as Slack (1996) points out, that articulation is a method or a practice for doing cultural studies, then my deployment of this concept hopes to add to such practice.

1.3 - Organisation of the Project

My project falls into three sections, which contain five chapters. Inspired by the installation artwork of Louise Bourgeoise (currently on display at the Tate Modern, London, England), my three sections are titled: I Do, I Undo and I Redo. Collectively called: *" Cell (Eyes and Mirrors)"*, Bourgeoise's three gigantic (about 20 m high) installation pieces look like narrow towers and invite the viewer to enter and ascend via spiral staircases. Each installation draws on the themes of looking and being looked at, via the strategic placement of a number of images, forms and mirrors. Following Dyer's (1993) consideration above, Bourgeoise's installation implicitly evokes the key theme of representation: vision, or what I term the privilege of *eye epistemology*.

PART 1 - I Do: This section contains two chapters and details my means to address Scott Gomez. Chapter 2 reviews selected literature on the hero. My review points out how fans have been neglected by socio-cultural analyses of the hero and celebrity in sport, and I use Jenkins' (1992) understanding of TV fans as textual poachers to consider sport fandom. Chapter 3 outlines my theoretical orientations (drawing from cultural, Chicana/o and postcolonial studies, literary and poststructuralist theory), together with some methodological pointers to my project. My eclectic approach to including such theory remains cognisant to my interest in culture, power and representation.

PART 2 - I Undo: This section contains two chapters. Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, contain, respectively my analyses of the media and fan texts. I use undo in two senses. Firstly, I undo because not all the readings included within Part 1 are evenly relevant across the analysis of the Gomez texts. This does not make Part 1 fully redundant, but points to how research changes on the application of theory to empirical instances. Rather than re-write Part 1 so my literature review and theoretical interests totally support my analyses, I decided to leave it as is, in order to illustrate this gap. Partially this gap also indicates how my interests have changed while conducting my analysis. However, my general concern with representation remains across both chapters, which leads me to my second instance of undoing – that is, I want to interrupt by undoing the political and poetic work of representation, by noticing the strategies and tactics of power across the Gomez texts. In order

to gauge continuities and discontinuities between fan and media representation that inform the PSI, I read the texts intertextually with one another.

PART 3 - I Redo: This section contains two parts, the final chapter and the reference list. My final chapter is a website that contains my project. Produced within academia, my website reflects my desire to take popular culture seriously. If, as de Certeau (1984) ascertains, popular culture is a system for subverting "the system" and appropriating its symbols and making them function in another register, then my website is an act to appropriate my work from the University library. Hence, my academic project is "redone" for Internet surfers and Gomez's fans in particular. In addition, hopefully my website offers those writers and fans of Gomez a means to respond to my work. In critiquing the popular imaginings of Scott Gomez, my website hopes to engage in that representation, by offering my work as another story or representation. Lastly, my website offers a means for me to continually redo my work, reflecting my changes as a scholar and fan. Hence, quite literally my project does not close. This section also contains my Reference List, which contains a number of hypertext links to connect my electronic readers to the Internet sites used within this project.

Rather than being an additive or progressive story, each section and chapter therein is relatively autonomous from one another. However, each of the chapters refers to one another and accordingly my thesis is fruitfully read intertextually across each of the chapters.

1.4- Obstacles and Limitations to Research

My research is not immune to the fact that all research has its limitations:

1. My project has obviously selected some texts and excluded others, which delimits my work, and in some instances signals a lack of media attention on Scott Gomez.
2. My analysis of websites poses some structural problems, as ScottyGomez.com rather than being a static text changed constantly during my period of research.
3. It is misguided to make too many assumptions about who Scott Gomez's fans are via their Internet gossip and website design. By who, I mean the identity descrip-

tors of man, woman, black, white and so on. By reading such online productions, all I can offer is an interpretation of how fans identify, that is commune and converse, both with each other and with Scott.

4. None of the sites included in my research indicate how many surfers the Gomez sites have enjoyed, thus it is inappropriate to speculate just how popular, in an empirical sense, these sites are.
5. My research could have been enhanced, although perhaps a different project, through chatting to some of Gomez's Internet fans and web authors. Yet, despite a number of attempts (over a 13 month period) to contact various people about the various Scott Gomez websites, I have received no response to my emails.
6. The fact that most major newspapers and magazines are now available, and are increasingly read online, blurs differences between "virtual texts" and "traditional texts". However, I separate my analysis into Internet fan texts versus newspaper/magazine texts. Whilst both are encompassed by the general label "media", I employ media within this project to refer to the mass media artefacts that enjoy institutional authority and: "reach a relatively large audience of usually anonymous readers" (Croteau and Hoynes, 2000, p. 7). Even more specifically my project only uses sport print-media articles. Conceivably, my project could have compared all Gomez information via the medium of the Internet, as fans are increasingly reading sports news online. A visit to the graduate computer room at any time of day testifies to this fact. Given access and convenience issues however, arguably most people, including fans, still receive sport via traditional media forms (TV, newspapers and magazines).

1.5 - Contributions to the Literature

My research on Scott Gomez is framed around Hall's (1997a/b) politics and poetics of representation. By doing so, my work is part of the over-determined category of textual analysis of the media and sport (Wenner, 1998). However, given the paucity of any kind of examination of "Hispanic" or "Latina/o" athletes within the sports literature to date, as noted by Davies and Harris (1998), I consider that my work fills an important niche, that extends previous examinations of "differences" or "otherness" within sport

media analyses. My textual scrutiny is part and parcel of my wider theoretical commitments to cultural studies. I employ cultural studies as an area of research that is attentive to cultural practices in relation to power within their socio-political contexts. Hence, arguably my work embraces McDonald and Birrell's (1999) call to read sport critically, through examining a "particular incident or celebrity as the site for exploring the complex interrelated and fluid character of power relations as the are constituted along the axes of ability, class, gender, and nationality" (p. 284). Conceivably race and ethnicity need to be added to the consideration too.

My project hopes to add to academic research by increasing the body of knowledge on the hero and celebrity within and outside the field of sport regarding: Internet studies, textual analysis, fan research and more generally audience reception or media/communication inquiries, through cultural studies, postcolonial and Chicano/a studies, via some of the insights of literary and poststructuralist theory

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NOTES

[1] "Sport" refers to professional sport here and throughout unless indicated otherwise.
[2] The New Jersey Devils will subsequently be referred to as NJ Devils or just the Devils.
[3] I place these descriptor words in quotation marks to bring attention to the fact these are not *my* words to describe Scott Gomez but labels employed by the media generally to place Gomez' Columbian/Mexican American heritage. I will discuss this later with reference to Anzaldúa's (1999) comments on colonial language. For ease of reading, I will no longer place such words in quotation marks, but I consider these terms as contested concepts, that not only have a particular history, but like other terms that singularly attempt to place and contain someone's identity/ies, are also highly problematic.
[4] At least Scott Gomez is the first Alaskan to make a regular NHL roster.
[5] I discuss distinctions between the mass media and fan-authored Internet texts within my Limitations and Obstacles section (1.4).
[6] In decoding representations of the golfer, Nancy Lopez Jamieson (1998) argues that non-dominant popular texts have been neglected in sport sociology. Such research for Jamieson (1998) then has overlooked the varied meanings non-dominant texts "may be constructing around particular events in the U.S. social and political landscape" (pp. 344-345).
[7] The m in marxist is deliberately in lowercase, reflecting Donald and Rattansi's (1992) usage.
[8] Eye epistemology (my own term, as far as I know) refers to a visual hierarchy with regards to knowledge production; here I mean specifically in "reading" people. De Certeau (1984) further acknowledges through the proliferation of media (TV, newspapers and advertising for example): "our society is characterized by a cancerous growth of vision, measuring everything by its ability to show or be shown and transmuting communication into a visual journey. It is a sort of epic of the eye and of the impulse to read" (p. xxi). Thus, de Certeau surmises, utilizing Baudrillard, that the economy has been transformed into a "semeiocracy".

PART ONE : I DO

CHAPTER 2 : REVIEW OF LITERATURE – PUBLICISING THE HERO

This review focuses on theorists who have considered the hero and/or the celebrity, especially within the American context, through socio-cultural analyses. I undertake this examination in order to consider Scott Gomez as an athlete hero within the PSI. Included here is work, both within the sport specific socio-cultural literature and the cultural studies arena more generally, that gives attention to the roles of both the media and fans. As highlighted before, Whannel (1992, 1998) argues that sports media organisations persistently use the hero as a key strategy to win and capture audiences. Hence, the hero for the sports media is a kind of practice used to make sport coverage meaningful. In addition, the hero continues to warrant fascination within a number of realms outside of sport, including: films, comics, computer games, novels, TV, and within the mediated political arena (Grixti, 1994). Arguably, commenting on mediated sport heroes enables more general commentary on culture/s. Wenner (1989) for instance argues with reference to American society: "*Mediated sports content* serves as a cultural signpost" (p. 42, original emphasis).

My reasoning behind this review is in part my frustration with recent academic social and historical sport commentaries that evoke athletes as heroes and/or celebrities merely as vehicles to: (1.) reflect certain cultural or political ideologies or (2.) to address social axes like the identities of race, ethnicity, nationhood, gender and sexuality. With reference to the former, Andrews' (1996a/b) and McDonald's (1996) different analyses on Michael Jordan both address the American political context. McDonald (1996) uses Jordan's body to comment on "larger cultural meanings and anxieties in post-Reagan America" (p. 344) and Andrews (1996b) notes that Jordan's particular body can be used to understand the "broader social and cultural concerns that dominate contemporary existence" (p. 316).

With reference to the latter, Whannel (1992) generally addresses athletes as stars with reference to media representation (see pp. 121-124); yet seamlessly switches to discuss such stars as "our heroes" (p. 124) with references to English nationhood and dominant masculinity. Holt, Mangan, and Lafranchi, (1996), and Kennedy (2000) also link the hero more readily with both the "grand" narratives of national belongingness and/or mas-

culine identity (in the singular), whereas the celebrity or star is utilised in order to speak to the more "lowly" promotional processes of commodified sport. Another explicit case of this interchange is Jackson's (1998) hailing of Wayne Gretzky as hero with reference to Canadian identity, yet one sentence later within his article labels Gretzky an "ice hockey star" (p. 24). Gretzky's stardom is detailed within a paragraph that discusses his move to the LA Kings from the Edmonton Oilers and marriage to the American actor Janet Jones. Jackson's (1998) retelling of Gretzky's stardom is thus linked to his "Americanization" and commodification; whereas Gretzky as hero is associated with his status as a Canadian national icon. Despite Jackson's (1998) overall critical examination of Canadian national identity through Wayne Gretzky and Ben Johnson, he implicitly finds athletic hero status as appropriate only with reference to (Canadian) national identity. Hence, Jackson (1998) is implying that hero is divorced from stardom and celebrity.

By writing generalised stories, contemporary analyses within the sport literature, conceivably neglect the potential overlap or divergence between the meanings of heroism or celebrityhood, either within the media texts being read or through the researchers' own writings. Obviously the recent commendable social and historical commentary (including: Andrews, 1996a/b; Holt, Mangan, and Lafranchi, 1996; Jackson, 1998; Kennedy, 2000; McDonald, 1996;Whannel, 1992, 1999) on the athlete hero has different research agendas to my own; but, arguably such slips are significant, and potentially reproduce the ways in which the media and fans also speak about sport heroism today. All of the above analysis on heroes and celebrities in sport generally neglect fans and their artefacts, like fanzines, within their assessments. In response to such examination, my work firstly wants to carefully note when star, celebrity or hero are used with reference to Scott Gomez across the narratives examined. Secondly, my analysis hopes to partially re-address the balance of hero analyses in sport to consider fans and their artefacts.

Unlike Wenner (1998), who argues that meanings through mediated sports texts frequently "extend beyond the myths of the playing field to offer lessons about cultural priorities and the current state of power relations" (p. 5), I would argue that it is precisely *through* such myths, albeit articulating with other social discourses, that such relations and priorities are established. Explicit within this latter sentiment, and implicit within much of the work included in this review, is the saliency of the question of representation

with regards to the heroic construction.[1] That is, in considering how heroes are publicised through the formations and practices of the media and fans, researchers engage with representation. The politics and poetics of representation is the theoretical framework I employ in Chapter 3 to examine the various Gomez texts.

For the immediate concern of this literature review, I set up the discussion on the mediated sports hero with prior consideration to how the hero has traditionally been framed in myth and literature. My assessment then finishes with a consideration of how fans and audiences remain integral to the hero equation. Fan appreciation is also a frequently neglected area of analysis. Towards the end of this review, I comment on how this literature has influenced my own research. My project, as detailed within my introduction, looks to consider Scott Gomez as an emerging hero within the PSI. In order to spin my tale about Gomez, I consider a number of cultural artefacts including newspapers, magazines and fan-produced websites.

The hero has been studied across a variety of disciplines, from anthropology, history, philosophy, literary and film studies. What is included below is thus an interdisciplinary review of the hero literature.

2.1 - The Traditional and Modern Hero Myth: Literature, Gender, Race and Sport

> Tales of heroic endeavour have been popular from time immemorial, and some of the world's most influential narratives have invited readers and listeners to admire, emulate and/or measure themselves against the deeds, attitudes and beliefs of the great and famous. (Grixti, 1994, p. 214)

> Heroes speak of who we were, who we are, and who we would be. (Drucker and Cathcart, 1994, p. vii)

Typically, the hero refers to an individual who transcends the everyday by performing great deeds that go beyond the call of duty. In Western literature, the *Iliad* contains the first printed appearance of the word hero (Curtius, 1907). From Greek warrior of oral tradition to the chivalrous knight of the middle ages, the hero possesses the manly virtues of honour, courage, and excellence. Heroes of the past are thus warrior figures, leaders of "men" who generally emerge in times of crises, like war (Fishwick, 1954). Closer attention to the Greek ideal further reveals that the heroic was not just linked to

warfare, but connected to athletics too (Capon, 1998). For example the inclusion of Patroclus' Funeral Games in Book XXIII of Homer's *Iliad*, demonstrates that to be a superior athlete, like Achilles, was integral to being a consummate warrior. Thus, it is the male athlete-warrior that becomes the unproblematised Greek/Classical/Ancient hero in Western culture (see Capon, 1998; Capon & Helstein, 2001; and Cohen, 1990).

Both women and femininity within such a myth are secondary characters existing only to confer the status of the hero as the protagonist. "Real or imaginary or both" (Boorstin, 1962, p. 49) the hero within myth symbolises a struggle to understand the world, to try and make order out of crisis and chaos, to bring understanding to the unexplainable (Drucker and Cathcart, 1994). According to Campbell (1949), it is through heroic mythical narratives that societies perpetuate collective values, affirm social norms and contribute to communal bonds. Through myths, social groups thus attempt to make sense of *their* identities and *their* place in the world. Thus myths tell stories about communities. The narrative structure of myth is organized into a coherence called mythology (Grixti, 1994). Yet, in making intelligible the unexplainable, traditional mythologies of heroism legitimate, through the emphasis on strength, mastery, aggression and bravery, certain conventions like hegemonic masculinity, patriarchy, and heterosexism (see Connell, 1987; Featherstone, 1992; Horrocks, 1995; and Munt, 1998).

Cleaver's (1968) *"The White Race and Its Heroes"* further points out that the "venerated [white] figures" of American "History" like George Washington and Thomas Jefferson who owned black slaves, are no longer acceptable as models of how to live for black or white youth. With reference to slavery abolitionism and the rhetoric of equality contained within the Declaration of Independence, Cleaver (1968) states:

> But the moment the blacks were let into the white world – let out of the voiceless and faceless cages of their ghettos, singing, walking, talking, dancing, writing, and orating their image of America and of Americans – the white world was suddenly challenged to match up its practice to its preachments. (p. 205)

Given that Cleaver (1968) goes onto to discuss Muhammad Ali, sport should also be added to those acceptable arenas where black folks are permitted to enter "the white

world". Cleaver's (1968) cogent arguments continually underscore the tension between his position as a Black American to American traditions.

Hourihan's (1997) examination of certain popular (predominantly children) stories also points out that the traditional hero in Western culture is not just typically a man who is representative of a dominant masculinity, but is also a white male colonist of British, European or American ancestry. Hence, it is not only "History" that provide narrow models of heroism. Hourihan's (1997) consideration includes: *The Odyssey*, *Jack and the Beanstalk*, *Treasure Island*, *Doctor Who*, *Star Wars* and the latest James Bond thriller (p. 9). Hourihan (1997), however, is not attentive to the specificities of Western sport history and the media, despite citing Mason (1995) who argues that mediated sport is integral to the construction of heroes today. Accordingly, mediated athlete heroes for Mason (1995), perpetuate and naturalise certain kinds of masculinity. More recently, the messages of such stories have begun to be questioned which have somewhat democratised the hero. Hourihan (1997) points to the social reform movements (since the 1960s) against racism, sexism and environmental destruction. Despite the emerging representations of more fragile male heroes and women heroes across popular culture, Hourihan argues that the dominant and narrow tale of heroism continues to be told. Hourihan gives the examples of recent popular protagonists in films, including: James Bond, Rambo, Rocky, Luke Skywalker, and Indiana Jones, together with the leading characters of most sci-fi computer games.

Similar to Mason (1995) other academic sport commentators remark on the prevalence of such heroism today. For example, Griffin (1998) points out the team-sports hero is very much tied to this dominant masculinity: "[f]or many people the male team-sports hero is the epitome of masculinity: strong, tough, handsome, competitive, dating or married to the most desirable woman" (p. 25). Gruneau and Whitson (1993) also argue that the modern professional hockey hero is a close relative to the ancient heroes of Western literature:

> Indeed, the twentieth-century male sports hero has arguably become the modern successor to the masculine heroes of ancient Western mythology, the exemplar of all that is perceived to be the best in warrior-men, the individual who triumphs when it matters most and when the forces arrayed against him seem most daunting. These are precisely the kinds of expecta-

> tions that are built up around our best-paid hockey stars, both by the fans who follow them and, especially, by the myth-makers in the contemporary media and entertainment industries. (p. 142)

Kennedy (2000) further attaches class and nationhood to the construction of the masculine sports hero today. Thus, seemingly traditional and modern heroism within and outside of sport has been theoretically attached to the discourses of dominant masculinity, colonialism, whiteness, nationhood and class. The narrow variability of traditional and modern heroes leads to the question: exactly *who* would admire or emulate such individuals?

For Rosenau (1992) heroes are protagonists in the progressive narrative of history who are able to influence dramatic events. As such, Rosenau (1992) relates traditional heroism to Enlightenment and modernist discourses. Vande Berg (1998) more specifically examines the modern and postmodern sport hero and I review her arguments below. For now, I want to point out that arguably there is an initial notable distinction to be drawn between the traditional and the modern hero.[2] MacIntyre (1985) argues in referencing heroism to selfhood, that heroes within pre-modern times have to be considered as both part and parcel of the societies in which they lived in.[3] Heroes, for MacIntyre (1985) have social roles that are only intelligible within a social status system. Heroic virtues, like courage and honour, and their demonstration take place within a "kind of enacted story" (MacIntyre, 1985, p. 125) and judging someone's actions is to judge their character. In this way, morality and social structure are synonymous in heroic societies. Consequently, there is no outside (unless you are a stranger or slave), no way of detaching yourself from any particular standpoint. Identity within heroic societies requires then particularity and accountability (MacIntyre, 1985, p. 126). The self of the heroic age for MacIntyre is thus diametrically oppositional to the individualist selfhood of modernity, as the latter argues for the capacity of individuals to detach themselves from all particularity, consequently being able to judge a point of view from the outside. MacIntyre arges that Nietzsche's philosophy is the prime candidate for asserting such modernist selfhood. For example, as outlined by MacIntyre (1985, p. 129), Nietzsche's re-reading of the heroes in Ancient Greek literature, considers such protagonists as individualist, aristocratic, transcendent, and beyond society. Yet, MacIntyre in following through with his commu-

nitarian and ethnocentric sensibilities, not only insists that heroes are part of the social and moral fabric of communities past, but heroic societies are integral to understanding classical society, and its Western successors. Thus, MacIntyre, in a lament of the violent heroic communities of the past, considers that such societies remain present today through Western social traditions.

2.12 - The Hero as a Model for Cultural Values and Beliefs

Although I do not endorse all of MacIntrye's (1985) assertions, implicit in his arguments is that despite seemingly personifying individualism, heroes do not exist in isolation, but require recognition. Firstly, all heroes need hero worshippers. Within the mythical narrative individual transcendence is attached to the social - the actions of heroes absorbed by identification seemingly save "us" by making our lives better and more meaningful. Through this redemptive function, Wallace (1994) argues that the hero brings groups together in common agreement and act as "symbol of unification", reaffirming the "public mores of society" (p. 170). Precisely because myth traditionally celebrates dominant social values, Dyson (1993) argues that given the marginalized status of people of colour within America, success by black athletes, including Ali, Robinson and Ashe, take on heroic dimensions that have potential social and political repercussions within and beyond sport. Consequently, black sport heroes, are important: "icons of cultural excellence, symbolic figures who embodied social possibilities of success denied to other people of color" (Dyson, 1993, p. 66). Undoubtedly, as noted by Hall (1992c) and Mercer (1994), athletes of colour also have to bear the burden of this social-cultural representativeness (see my later discussion on the how success for people of colour remains, problematically, to the realm of "non-serious" sport). This in turn points out that social and psychic identification processes, whether affirming or running counter to dominant cultural values and discourses, remain integral to the consideration of the hero. Indeed those heroes who embody counter values to the status quo arguably are not traditional heroes, but anti-heroes (see my discussion of Vande Berg's, 1998 work, below).

Secondly, if heroes need worshippers, they also require storytellers. As I outline above, the traditional dissemination of the hero was by the oral poet. Currently, the media, including journalists, publicists and advertisers, as Kellner (1982; 1995) argues, have

co-opted the role of storyteller for the hero. Consequently for Drucker and Cathcart (1994): "[the] unsung hero is an oxymoron" (p. 10). Thirdly, storytellers publicise the deeds of heroes through ethical evaluations and thus articulate the hero to certain values. Klapp (1962), for instance, argues: "[h]eroes state major themes on an ethos, the kinds of things people approve" (p. 27). Oriard (1982) further argues, through his examination of the salience of the athlete hero myth to American novels, that in the land of opportunity, athlete heroes are typically icons of the "American Dream"; that is, they are ethical, self-made men who are successful through hard work, competitiveness, forcefulness and the belief in perfection (Mangan and Holt, 1996). Thus, American heroes for Oriard (1982) through fan identification "embody something very close to our national identity" (p. 26). More generally, however, conceivably heroes are not always morally perfect; rather in conferring hero status there is an ethical assessment (Capon, 1998).

Yet, as detailed by Hourihan's (1997) comments above with reference to the traditional hero (p. 14), ethical hero assessment often privileges certain values over others. Thus, Oriard's (1982) insistence of "our" American national identity, begs the questions who exactly does "our" represent, and which values is Oriard affirming? Klapp (1962) actually speaks of heroes, together with villians and fools through the idea of social typing. Social types for Klapp (1962) are the representations of those who "belong" to a particular community or nation. Whereas, stereotypes are those who do not quite belong to such social groupings. Klapp (1962) traces his distinctions onto geo-political placcings: social types of Americans versus stereotypes of non-Americans. In reworking Klapp's (1962) distinctions, Dyer (1993) argues that the types produced by different social groups operate according to a sense of who belongs and who does not, which he traces onto power relations. Dyer (1993) concludes his discussion with the idea that it is actually difficult in practice to distinguish between stereotyping and social typing, partially due to the fact different social groupings overlap, for example: "men belong, blacks do not, but what of black men?" (p. 15). Given the previous descriptions of traditional heroes however, heroic representation certainly seems to involve the processes of stereotyping or social typing. Chapter 3 further indicates the more general and persistent use of stereotyping that mass media sport representation practices.

Heroic subjectivities are thus conferred through the processes of identification, ethical evaluation, publicity and representational social typing or stereotyping. Heroes are not born, but rather are socially constructed and articulated to certain values and discourses. As such, heroes are produced and reproduced through stories recited across different times and spaces. If the hero has traditionally been disseminated by stories told within oral cultures, whereas today the hero is narrated within the print and broadcast media, arguably the medium of transmission requires understanding. I now turn to the communication theorists: Boorsin (1962), Drucker and Cathcart (1994), Strate (1994), together with Vande Berg (1998) who all address the salience of the medium of transmission with reference to the construction of the hero.

2.2 - Communicating Contemporary Heroism Through the Media and Sport: From Hero to Celebrity?

> We live in a culture in which heroes of the commercially fantasized variety are as plentiful in supply as they are in demand. Whether this is a cause for celebration as defenders of heroic fantasies suggest is clearly a matter of debate....What distinguishes the mass-produced heroic fantasies of advanced capitalism from most of their antecedents is that they are generally presented in packages which predispose their audiences to consume them as ultimately inconsequential entertainments. (Grixti, 1994, pp. 223-224)

One way to enter the debate on heroism today is consider how the hero is publicised through the media. To this end, Strate (1994) argues like Drucker and Cathcart (1994), that the form and function of the hero is concomitantly altered as the communication medium changes (from oral history to printing press to mass media). Strate (1994), utilizing Ong (1981), argues that heroes produced through oral cultures are "large" and "generic" in order to enhance memory retention (pp. 17-18). Whereas, heroes produced through mediated cultures can be "lighter" and more personable (Strate, 1994, p. 18). Boorstin (1962), as Strate (1994) identifies, was one of the first to discuss the importance of techno-medium changes in relation to the hero. Boorstin (1962) correlates such changes to the dearth of "true" heroic figures. With specific regards to America, Boorstin (1962) argues that the "Graphic Revolution"[4] has enabled the growth of "celebrity" at the

expense of "older forms of greatness" (p. 57). Such contemporary electronic mediated heroes-as-celebrity for Boorstin are merely "pseudo-events". Boorstin (1962) employs pseudo to emphasise not only the media's obsession with image, the celebrity is a person after all merely "known for his well-knowness" (p. 57); but also to stress the moral ambivalence of such individuals – "neither good nor bad, great nor petty" (p. 57). After all celebrities are not typically assessed by the same normative standards which judges heroes. Event is used by Boorstin to note the highly motivated and staged production of contemporary mediated celebrityhood by public relations counsel.

Boorstin (1962) emphasises that both the hero and the celebrity are made, but the method of production has fundamentally changed. While gossip, newspapers, magazines, television, etc. produce the celebrity, the hero of the past belongs to sacred texts, folklore and history books. By venerating heroes of the past against today's vulgar celebrity/pseudo-heroes, Boorstin favours an elitist, Frankfurt School inspired, notion of "high" culture over a more popular ("low") one. For instance, Boorstin locates true cultural heroes in "History" books – but whose heroic deeds are re-told in such books? Boorstin's examples of Aeneas, Washington, Napoleon and Lincoln clearly point to who he thinks heroes should be and what actions they ought to perform. Accordingly, Boorstin neglects the fact that the media have partially popularised, pluralized and democratised the hero. Rather than ringing the death toll completely on heroes, Drucker and Cathcart (1994) moderate Boorstin's comments by arguing that: "[c]ontemporary heroes must also be celebrities .... Not all celebrities are heroes, but today no person can be a hero without also being a celebrity" (p. 10). Implied by Caughey's (1984) arguments, conceivably the point of overlap between heroes and celebrities is their existence as "media figures" and through their dual embrace of commodification.

As indicated previously, there are some claims that Boorstin makes with regards to hero/celebrity that I do not support; yet, the change from hero to celebrity, from oral culture to printing and electronic media, has relevance to how sport heroism is both framed within this project and how it is discussed in popular discourses. Sport heroism and celebrityhood are produced and proliferated by the media. Indeed the media increasingly frames our knowledge/s and understanding/s of sport, and far more people watch, talk and read about sport than actually engage in sport through physical exertion (Rowe,

1999). Technological changes, including the advent of radio and television, mean that journalists have co-opted the role of the storyteller from ancient times (Cathcart, 1994). Hence, Hook (1943) argues that only "synthetic" heroes exist, as: "[w]hoever controls the microphones and printing presses can make or unmake belief overnight" (p. 10).

Implied within their separate examinations of celebrity and heroism, Cathcart (1994) and Drucker (1994) argue like Hook (1943) and Smith (1973), that by becoming celebrity, the hero is transformed into a tarnished or Boorstinian pseudo-hero. Smith's (1973) analysis further argues that the media not only creates, but also destroys heroes/celebrities. The decanonization of sport heroes for Smith (1973) has occurred partially due to increasing media scrutiny into athletes' private lives.[5] In a more recent hero examination, Benedict (1997) too claims the dearth of "real" athlete heroes today. Many revered "public [male athlete] heroes" today through their multitude of violent crimes against women are merely "private felons" for Benedict and thus not "real" heroes at all. Benedict partially blames this state of affairs on the publicity mechanisms of the media, arguing that: "[a]t a time when society is searching for legitimate heroes, the traditional credentials of heroism – courage, honesty, bravery, self-sacrifice – are being replaced by visibility, wealth, and fame." (p. 217). Despite all the declarations that sports heroes like all heroes today are an endangered species, Drucker and Cathcart (1994) assert that contemporary athlete heroes remain the primary representative of celebritydom:

> [n]ow, when the national anthem is sung, it is not the politician but the sports figure waiting to take center field, court, or ice who is perceived as a likely hero. The concept of sports hero is arguably an illusion as sports figures today may be said to be performers acting in the process of mediated celebration. (p. 4)

Lasch (1980) similarly speaks to tarnished commodified athletic heroism. In contemporary "degraded sport", the athlete is conceived of as entertainer and sport as business. This in turn, makes it difficult to conceive: "of the athlete as a local or national hero, as the representative of his class or race .... Only the recognition that sports have come to serve as a form of entertainment justifies the salaries paid to star athletes and their prominence in the media" (Lasch, 1980, p. 211). Lasch locates the cultural crisis of sport to the rise of spectacles (Alt, 1983). Problematically for Alt (1983) spectacle is

structured by "commodity rationalisation" that alters sport to "meet market and technical criteria" (p. 98). Accordingly, ritual has given way to commodified spectacle that produces individualized subjects who can no longer engage in meaningful communion through sport. This individualization reflects MacIntyre's (1985) commentary on Nietzsche's description of modernist heroic selfhood that isolates itself from communitarian bonds. Rather than being role models (on or off the ice),[6] for many critics of sport including Lasch (1980), Alt (1983) and Hargreaves (1986), athlete heroes/celebrities are conceived as means to social control, proliferating and selling certain (i.e. preferred or dominant) values and ideas. By taking such a stance, arguably these critics of sport, similar to Boorstin's (1962) rejection of "low" culture, can be accused of elitism reserving the title of hero for more "serious" and seemingly uncommodified arenas. In addition, sport as spectacle also has a tendency to treat audiences as passive consumers. This point is contested later, in discussion of Jenkins' (1992) idea of active fan producers.

As Harris (1994) points out, pessimists of sport (on both the Left and the Right) frequently maintain certain essential qualities for heroism. Yet, Harris (1994) details that we live in a time where socio-cultural disillusionments have brought about the questioning of universal values, which have led to a deterioration of archetypal heroes with universal appeal. Harris notes more optimistically that a more relativistic stance on heroism contends that heroes change through times and across spaces. Rather than condemning American society to unhealthy deterioration, Harris points out that this latter stance enables a more fluid and openness to social change.

If, as Lasch (1980) asserts, contemporary sport is *only* business or entertainment spectacle, then retaining the concept of hero, as opposed to celebrity, may afford sport a different status. By not equating sport to business, we are reminded of the actions and bodies of athletes within the sport arena. Here, as Roberts (1994) argues, poet-athletes struggle to perform under the glare of public scrutiny. What after all do athletes risk? Roberts (1994) suggest that unlike some artists or scientists, athletes do not have the luxury of rubbish bins in order to throw away their embarrassments. Hence, by only describing athletes today negatively as celebrities, we foreclose the possibility they could be anything else, or that sport is anything other than entertainment spectacle.

By accepting sport equates to entertainment spectacle, arguably necessitates rejecting that fans or other people participating in popular culture could meaningfully identify with heroes (or even celebrity-heroes) like Scott Gomez, or even derive pleasure from such identification. If, as Munt (1998) argues, the hero is a "metaphor for self in movement, change and process" (p. 2), then the hero offers a powerful cultural model. Actually, Munt (1998) retains the right to speak of heroes today via her celebration of marginalized "lesbian heroes". Munt's (1998) assertions point to limitations in Drucker and Cathcart's (1994) assumption that all heroes are celebrities today (detailed previously), as the "lesbian heroes" Munt (1998) addresses are everyday women who are not necessarily in the media eye. Gomez's heroicness is also frequently bestowed with reference to his marginalized ethnic heritage (Columbian/Mexican/American-Alaskan).

Are heroes discussed in the quite the same way that a Hollywood star is? Few would herald Mike Tyson (having served a prison sentence for rape) as a hero today, yet the boxer certainly retains celebrity status. Clearly, such labelling is profoundly motivated and I am not arguing that there is such a thing as an authentic hero separate from a celebrity. Rather, I just want to consider the persistence of the hero in sport discourses today.

If the hero needs to reconsidered, so too does the celebrity. For example, Dyer (1985) suggests entertainment offers audiences an "image of something better" (p. 222). Dyer's assertion here has resonance with heroes functioning as exemplars to others. Further, Gamson (1992) distinguishes between two types of celebrities, one where the talented rise to the top and the other where the publicity apparatus of the media is the central character. As such Gamson (1992) argues that the "publicity machine focuses attention on the worthy, and unworthy alike" (p. 2). Given Gamson's (1992) assertions, as well as that most athlete heroes are celebrities today, although not all celebrities are heroes: is Gomez a worthy or unworthy celebrity according to his narratives?

If, as Boorstin (1962), along with Drucker and Cathcart (1994), and Strate (1994) maintain, the means of transmission of the hero is crucial, it is also the case that the conditions of transmission are salient. For example, Drucker and Cathcart (1994) argue that: "fragmentation, heterogeneity, pluralism, and multiculturalism – the watchwords of the day – [demand the question] can the American community reach the requisite consensus

on societal ideals and morals for bestowal of the title hero?" (p. 5). Moreover as indicated earlier, Rosenau (1992) contends that the hero, tied to modernist sentiments is a central figure within the narrative of history who is able to influence dramatic events. Due to the death of the author scenarios, a postmodern analysis for Rosenau (1992) necessitates a rejection of the traditional myth of the hero.

Vande Berg (1998) through considering the athlete hero/celebrity conjuncture does, however, consider the possibility of postmodern athlete heroism. Vande Berg places heroes as cultural phenomena within a communications analysis. Similar to the theorists detailed previously, Vande Berg argues that changes in technological transmission, from oral culture to print culture, alter the form and function of the hero. For Vande Berg (1998), contemporary sport heroes are produced and reproduced by the media and as such "today's heroes inevitably become celebrities" (p. 139). Vande Berg's enquiry forwards four heroic models: the modern hero, the antihero, the postmodern hero and new Age/nostalgic/neo-modernist sports hero.

Nolan Ryan (baseball player) and Joe Montana (football player) are the exemplar modern heroes for Vande Berg. Ryan and Montana transcend their humble backgrounds by performing great deeds across their long careers. Paragons of hegemonic masculinity, modern heroes embody discipline, strength, physical attractiveness, family values, a keen work ethic, and are white and heterosexual. Like many modern athlete heroes, Vande Berg continues that Ryan and Montana through their endorsement deals link celebrityhood to consumer culture. Modern athlete heroes are also considered as representative of achievement and overcoming the odds. Lastly, Vande Berg indicates that modern heroes personify many mainstream values and due to this unambiguousness, they tend to enjoy media support. This model especially through its embrace of dominant masculinity is for Vande Berg very much attached to traditional heroism (p. 139). As noted earlier, Gruneau and Whitson (1993) concur by arguing that hockey players and male athletes more generally, are modern successors to the mythologized heroes from ancient Western literature.

The modern hero thus serves as a counterfoil to Vande Berg's second heroic model that eschews mainstream values – the antihero. Disillusioned and rebellious, antiheroes speak out against "the system". The system may be sport, traditional notions of heroism or the socio-political milieu. Vande Berg forwards Muhammed Ali and Billy

Jean King as examples. Ali is considered anti-system due to his black power salute at the 1968 Olympics and his later refusal to fight against the Viet Cong for the US army. Billy Jean King gains antiheroic status due to her defeat of Bobby Riggs in the so-called "battle of the sexes" tennis match. Such athletes Vande Berg asserts, promoted social change in the 70s: Ali and the anti-Vietnam protests, and King's launch of a separate women's pro tennis circuit sponsored by Virginia Slims for example.

Vande Berg's third heroic model is the postmodern hero. In order to address the array of definitions of postmodernism, Vande Berg limits her analysis to sport and heroism. As a reaction to modernism Vande Berg (1998) describes postmodernism variously as: a culture of excess that is dominated by the pleasure principle, a pastiche mode and schizophrenia of styles that embrace unorthodox combinations, the waning of grand narratives, a questioning of science and the narrative of progress, a blurring of the real and the simulated, and as a culture of conspicuous consumption and relativism. Michael Jordan and Dennis Rodman are offered as examples of the postmodern athlete hero. Rather confusingly Jordan is portrayed by Vande Berg as possessing many of the modern hero qualities, like strength, endurance, athletic prowess, family values, work ethic and so on. His postmodernist stature seems secured only by his commodified status and his "dubious character". "Dubious" because Vande Berg argues that the US media revel in the rumours about Jordan's gambling addiction. Dennis Rodman is also representative of the postmodernist hero for Vande Berg through flamboyance and a pastiche of excess. Rodman's arrogance, cross-dressing, body piercing and ambiguous black sexuality are placed in sharp contrast to Jordan's conservative values and tamed sexuality. Rodman, according to Vande Berg (1998), continually "interrogates social conventions, dominant gender attitudes, the importance of sport, and the notion of heroism itself" (p. 148).

The last heroic model within Vande Berg's thesis is the nostalgia/new age/neomodernist sports hero. Vande Berg's focus here is Tiger Woods. Rather than just a celebrity, Tiger Woods' media representations seek to place him as a "real hero". For Vande Berg (1998), Woods represents a "newly resurrected, newly consecrated hero in a restored grand heroic narrative" (p. 150). As such, Woods for Vande Berg (1998) embodies "those truly utopian ideals of multi-culturalism, inner peace, confidence without arrogance" (p. 150). Such nostalgic rhetoric seemingly rejects postmodern fragmentation

with regards to the subject, the nation-state and so on, whilst concomitantly embracing a neomodernist holism. For example, Vande Berg (1998) argues how Woods' mixed race identity (part Thai, African, Chinese, native American, and European) places him as a "universal child", desperately needed for contemporary American culture (p. 151). Moreover, Vande Berg suggests that Tiger Woods, despite his commodified status, also embodies hope for heroism as his desire to be both a role model and a "gentleman" recall an earlier age of athleticism.

One of the major weaknesses of Vande Berg's paper is that it remains unclear whether Vande Berg's four heroic models appear simultaneously or not. Certainly Vande Berg's thesis seems to have a historical and/or progressive trajectory to it, as the first set of modern heroes are from the past (including Nolan Ryan and Joe Montana), whereas the later postmodern and neomodern examples are more contemporary athletes (including Dennis Rodman and Tiger Woods). Could not, however, the same athlete be read through both postmodern and modern lenses? In addition, arguably the same athlete could be both villain and hero. With regards to the latter points, Vande Berg admits Rodman could fit quite nicely into both postmodern and antihero labels. In addition, Jordan could be considered as much a modern as a postmodern hero. This raises questions about singularly labeling athletes, as hero, antihero, modern, postmodern and so on.

Vande Berg's arbitrary labeling of athletes as either antihero or hero demonstrates the general problem that hero status is often bestowed in retrospect and at different points in an athlete's career, complicating procedural historical analysis. For example, Lauren Sklaroff (2000) argues that Joe Louis' (the "brown bomber" of boxing during the 30s and 40s in America) heroic status fluctuated throughout his career for both blacks and whites. For instance, the white press referred to Louis early in his career as a "calmly savage Ethiopian"; then later, when fortifying patriotism became a priority, he became a "model American", and an "American hero" (all citations, p. 1). More ironically, Cleaver (1968) notes with reference to Muhammad Ali: "[t]here is no doubt that white America will accept a black champion, applaud and reward him, as long as there is no *white hope* in sight" (p. 92, emphasis added). Both Cleaver (1968) and Sklaroff (2000) are addressing the American press of the past, but Wenner (1995) notes how US sport journalists in mainstream media remain a "disproportionately white group" (p. 231). I would add too

that this group predominantly male too. The media representation of Scott Gomez, as a Colombian-Mexican-American, is also constructed within certain conditions and expectations, through certain practices that I discuss further in chapters 3 and 4.

Tellingly, the black power salutes of Ali, together with the US sprinters, John Carlos and Tommy Smith at the 1968 Olympics, actually provoked condemnation by the contemporary sport media (Whannel, 1992). Further I would ask for whom is Ali considered an antihero today? Arguably, Vande Berg's labelling of King and Ali as antiheroes fails to acknowledge the changing status of these icons for different social groups across time and space. Moreover, by selecting athlete heroes, journalists or researchers perhaps reveal more about their own ideological identities than any qualities embodied by an individual (Ingham, Howell and Swetman, 1993). Such meditations highlight that the hero is a contested and slippery concept, changing across space and time. Hence, salient questions for my research include - for whom is the hero made and from whom is the hero disseminated?

Vande Berg's argument considers that the mediated production of heroes irrevocably changes the form and function of the hero. Yet, Vande Berg implicitly admits, that the modern athlete hero is not fully distinguishable from the traditional hero due to their dual embrace of dominant masculinity (see also Gruneau and Whitson, 1993; and Griffin, 1998), despite the fundamental change in the vehicle of transmission (from oral to print cultures). The hero also remains attached to narrative form, however mediated, and as Kellner (1982,1995) argues, the media have merely co-opted the role of storyteller. Consequently it is now the media that supplies representations and myths, through stories, images, and spectacles, that assist in constituting a common culture for a vast array of people across the world today (Kellner, 1995, p. 1). Furthermore, the hero arguably has always been attached to some kind of publicity mechanism, from oral to print culture. Hence, as I detailed earlier the: "unsung hero is an oxymoron" (Drucker and Cathcart, 1994, p. 10). Lastly, Gamson (1992) relates how fame from the Latin derivative merely means, "manifest deeds" (p. 1), which very much articulates the hero and celebrity together, prior to the advent of print and electronic media. Thus continuities, rather than complete epistemological breaks with tradition, could be posited. Not only does this latter point apply to Vande Berg's thesis, but to the works of Boorstin (1962), Drucker and

Cathcart (1994) and Strate (1994), who also focus their analyses to the communication transmission. This is not to suggest that the communication medium, as I argued above, is not salient, just that other issues also inflect heroic construction.

Despite some limitations, Vande Berg's arguments clearly address the concepts of contemporary commodified athlete heroism, and the salience of communication media of transmission. Further, whilst Rosenau (1992) conceptually writes off the hero as a modernist project, Vande Berg examines the hero innovatively through a postmodern analysis. Despite tying the hero to its communication transmission, Vande Berg, similar to the other communication analysts (including Strate, 1994; Drucker and Cathcart, 1994) neglects the proliferation of Internet information on athlete heroes. Arguably, through examining Internet narratives about Gomez, my project is an extension of such work. Notwithstanding my reservations outlined with Vande Berg's work, change as well as continuity to the form and functions of the hero could be apparent with both the media and Internet narratives of Gomez.

Another notable article relevant to my project, is McDonald's (1996) examination of the media representations on Michael Jordan. McDonald (1996) argues that Jordan's body provides a noteworthy site to investigate larger socio-cultural meanings in post-Reagan America. As such, McDonald speaks to various media and advertising texts of Jordan through their associations to Black masculinity, sexuality and the nuclear family. McDonald's (1996) text never refers to Jordan as a hero, instead he is considered variously as a: "celebrated body" (p. 344), "cultural and marketing icon" (p. 346), "spectacular athlete" (p. 347), "All-American" (p. 350), and "commodified persona" (p. 361). In a later article McDonald and Birrell (1999), address the need to consider athletes as celebrities or heroes, including Michael Jordan, as "repositories for political narratives" (p. 292). McDonald and Birrell's (1999) paper actually argues that cultural analysis in sport should focus on a particular celebrity in order to explore "the complex interrelated and fluid character of power relations as they are constituted along the axes of ability, class, gender and nationality" (p. 284). Arguably race and ethnicity needed to be added to the mix too. In part, my project is sensitive to this call, as I investigate how such socio-axes are articulated through the "text(s)" of Scott Gomez.

As previously indicated, it is Gomez's positioning as a Colombian/Mexican (and American) that overtly forms his heroic status within many of the media narratives (detailed later in Chapter 4). The mediated construction of Gomez as an icon to "Hispanics" highlights how athletes are often conferred hero status because they are considered representative of certain groups (for example: the American hero, the Black hero etc.), and through their actions beyond the playing field. Thus, Gomez is conceivably not just an athlete hero, but a hero who happens to an athlete. Dyson's (1993) comments, as previously detailed, are salient through his projection that athletes of colour embody the social possibilities of success and are thus exemplars to other people of colour within society (see also Tatz, 1995, who looks at the positive role of sport for Aboriginal Australians, cited in Rowe, 1998). Rowe (1998) further points out the "rise to global superstar status" of Michael Jordan and Shaquille O'Neal and their lucrative deals with Nike and McDonalds, demand questions about the responsibilities and: "representative status of those Black athletes who have manifestly and materially benefited from the sports/media complex" (p. 249). Arguably, the transfer of social success is empirically debatable and the fact this success derives from sport legitimates and thus contains material and social success for people of colour ideologically to the confines of "non-serious" sport. In turn this reproduces that "people of colour" are "allowed to succeed" in sports within the US, in ways that are not sanctioned within other professions like business, law, medicine and so on. Mercer (1994), for example, highlights that the "spectacle of sport" re-authorises the stereotype that black athletes are spectacular bodies, rather than intelligent individuals (cited in Kellner, 1996).

Rather than necessarily placing Gomez solely within recent political contexts, primarily I want to consider what the various texts of Gomez say about heroism today. Taking Vande Berg's typology into account and my critique thereof, together with being sensitive to certain media and fan narratives: firstly, which heroic models, if any, does Gomez gravitate towards? Following Gruneau and Whitson's (1993) assertions about hockey players, is Gomez, for example, only a modern hero and successor to the masculine heroes of ancient Western mythology? Secondly, if heroes as I have argued function as representative figures for individuals, as well as groups and communities – what

groups is Gomez speaking for/representative of? This latter question speaks to the politics of representation, addressed in subsequent chapters.

There are significant differences between my work and McDonald's (1996). Firstly and most importantly, part of my reasoning for choosing Scott Gomez was precisely because of his relatively lowly, but emerging sports star status compared to the likes of Michael Jordan. Arguably, my work both adds to and interrupts the typical sport analyses that only deal with major sport figures. Beyond the obvious amount of airtime given to Gomez compared to more established sport personalities, what do Gomez's representations say and do? Secondly, McDonald's cultural analysis, like others on Michael Jordan (for example, Dyson, 1993; Andrews, 1996a/b), despite speaking to such a celebrated athlete, are not focused around explicitly considering the operations of celebrity or hero within the media texts examined. Moreover, other social commentary on sport like Whannel (1992; 1999) and Jackson (1998), also use hero and celebrity/star interchangeably within their work without reflecting if nuances are operating within their own writing or within the texts they are reading. My comments do not propose a binary opposition between heroes and stars; I merely want to point out how such words operate within and across particular narratives.

Thirdly, McDonald's (1996) investigation, similar to most research on ethnic/racial stereotyping in the sports media (as noted by Davies and Harris, 1998)[7], is focused on examining African American male athletes, whereas my work looks to consider the under-examined representations of a "Latino" athlete who is considered quite an anomaly in the world of professional hockey. Lastly, by adding fans into my story on Scott Gomez, my project differs from both McDonald's (1996) and Vande Berg's (1998). On this note, McDonald and Birrell (1999) argue that athlete heroes like Scott Gomez (they highlight Michael Jordan) are decentred from the "text known culturally as" Scott Gomez. This decentring process occurs for McDonald and Birrell (1999) through the sheer weight of narratives proliferated about Scott Gomez, which means: "his meaning escapes him" (p. 292). Yet, Barthes (1977) notes the decentring process of de-privileging the author as the key to understanding a text, is through the re-appreciation of audience reception. Although Barthes (1977) points out that this does not mean audiences or readers of texts possess the final answer to a text's meaning, rather, it indicates that the au-

thor's imposed "limit" on the text is removed. Thus, claims to decipher a text once and for all become futile (p. 147). Despite being different from McDonald and Birrell's (1999) premises, although arriving at a similar conclusion, I argue that Gomez is conceivably further displaced by how fans use texts and plural usages in turn further exceed any singular meaning. I further examine the concept of "Authorship" in Chapter 3, now I turn to consider sport fans.

2.3 - Sport, Media, Online Fanaticism and Textual Poachers

> Heroic narratives capture and express the desires of diverse political subjects. (Munt, 1998, p. 10)

As argued previously, storytellers require audiences and heroes need worship or identification. Consequently, the sports media does not fully determine heroism, as fans not only have to be convinced by mediated hero stories, as Wenner (1989) argues, but also they actively participate in proliferating the hero through other popular cultural texts.

2.31 - Cybersport and Fan Netzines[8]

Increasingly fans receive sport via the Internet and thus participate in what McDaniel and Sullivan (1998) term "Cybersport". From websites that engage in fantasy games, real-time video, biography, and player statistics, to chat rooms and email listservs, there are a number of ways fans can interact with sport today. Internet technology means that potentially individuals from different parts of the world can not only independently worship their athlete hero, but fellow fans can also communicate with one another via email, discussion forums, chat rooms and guestbooks. Although Rowe (1999) argues the Internet and digital technology require researchers to re-assess the sports media generally, my specific interest within this project is to examine how sports audiences propagate heroism by constructing fanzine websites ("fan netzines") and through chatting online about their favourite athletes via *Computer Mediated Communication* (*CMC*). Well at least, with regards to a specific athlete, Scott Gomez. Arguably, as McDaniel and Sullivan (1998) assert, sport delivered via the Internet, or *cybersport*, compared to traditional media, enables a more interactive medium with which fans can engage. Consequently,

McDaniel and Sullivan (1998) assert that the sports audience today are closer to combining the roles of spectator and participant.

As McDaniel and Sullivan (1998) point out little to date has been written about *cybersport*, let alone my particular interest in online fandom. Consequently my work hopefully will open up not only how heroism is considered in the sports pages, but how online fans also engage with sport heroes today. Due to the paucity of research on *cybersport* together with sport fans, I begin my discussion on cyberspace, and then consider media fandom more generally through Jenkins' (1992) work, before considering theorists who have specifically considered sport-media fans.

2.32 - Athlete Hero.com - Communities and Subjectivities in Cyberspace

Cyberspace is a term coined in the novel *Neuromancer* (1984) by the science fiction writer William Gibson. Cyberspace (or the 'matrix') for Gibson (1984) is:

> [A] consensual hallucination experienced daily by billions of legitimate operators, in every nation, by children being taught mathematical concepts...A graphic representation of data abstracted from the banks of every computer in the human system. Unthinkable complexity. Lines of light ranged in the nonspace [*sic*] of the mind, clusters and constellations of data. Like city lights receding. (p. 67)

Although Gibson (1984) left "consensual hallucination" quite ill defined, he later described it as the points where the media flow together, enveloping everyday life. Indeed with Gibson's (1984) cyberspace: "you can literally wrap yourself in media and not have to see what's really going on around you" (Gibson, cited in Wooley, 1992, p. 121). Today cyberspace is often used synonymously with references to the Internet (Wooley, 1992). The Internet, which includes the World Wide Web, is merely a widely dispersed communications network. It started life as a network connecting computers to radio and satellite systems in the 1960s, developed by academic institutions through US Defence Department funding, and is now a global system circulating a huge range of information.

As I outline above there are a number of cyberknowledges available about athletes today. Arguably, not only do new communication media change the form and function of the hero (from oral to print and electronic forms), but, sports fans as online subjects are also re-constituted. Poster (1990) for instance, in using the poststructualist theme

of subject construction via communication acts and configurations, speaks to Internet subjectivities, where:

> [c]hanges in the configuration or wrapping of language alters the way the subject processes signs into meanings, that sensitive point of cultural production. The shift from oral and print wrapped language to electronically wrapped language thus reconfigures the subject's relation to the world. (p. 11)

Accordingly, Poster (1990) posits "new configurations of the subject" (p. 16) and further argues for that *CMC* effectively "cancels contexts, creating new speech situations" (p. 45). In his conclusion, Poster (1990) extends his discussion of the subject to relations between subjects, forwarding that although there are disintegrating impulses at work in the new mode of information, *CMC* offers new forms of sociality. Hence, Poster (1990) argues that *CMC* may foster a "community of multiplicity" (p. 154).

Mitra (1996), in a way, takes up Poster's concluding remarks and argues for "virtual commonality" via the Internet. Mitra's arguments about online community formations also have resonance with Jenkins (1992) discussion around fans' identifications, as outlined below. Mitra (1996) states, in speaking to community as a way in which humans organize their lives':

> In the electronic age, particularly in the age of the Internet, this organization of human activities has become more complex with the availability of fast, efficient and powerful means of communication that can have a significant impact on the way we organize communities we live in and interact with. (p. 55)

To some extent Mitra (1996) follows Anderson's (1983) idea that communities and nations can be "imagined" around shared cultural practices.[9] This idea extends the structural notions of community beyond historical and geographical bounds. Mitra (1996) thus considers how an electronic community "can textually produce itself, thus imagine itself – as well as present itself to the outside world, and thus produce an image" (p. 55). Although, the idea of people "communing" through the Internet is slightly problematic as cybersufing is a somewhat individualized activity, where people sit in front of screens tapping on a keyboard or navigating with a mouse. Despite the technophobic dehumanist

claims about the Internet and technological invention more generally, Mitra (1996) points out that even the development of fire fundamentally changed the ways humans relate or communicate to one another. Thus, *cybersport* amongst other popular cultural formations adds to how we imagine communities today. My research thus wants to address what this form of communication says about how fans identify with an athlete hero and how they interact with one another.

Not only does thinking about the Internet open up ways we typically think about communities, but, academic research has also arguably been changed by the development of the Internet. My research on Scott Gomez involved a number of Internet searches. Firstly, for the work included within this project I used the search engine Google.[10] This general search put me in contact with a number of Gomez devoted websites, including his "official" website hosted by his fanclub, NJ Devils' website, Latino Sports Legends website; together with a proliferation of "unofficial" fan run sites including those designed by: Tiffy, Kelly and Julie, Liz, and Andrea. Actually, many of these sites also connect to one another through hypertext links.[11]

Secondly, I also used the Internet to do online newspaper and sports magazine searches. Including the *Anchorage Daily News* (*ADN*), the *New York Times (NYT)* and *Sports Illustrated (SI)*.[12] Although I subsequently retrieved the articles via mircofiche or directly from the source, this method of researching potentially blurs distinctions between news delivered via the traditional media, like newspapers and magazines, and news delivered via the Internet. As I detailed within Chapter 1, I address the media quite specifically within this project to refer to mass print-media artefacts that enjoy institutional authority.

2.33 - Textual Poachers and Media Sports Fans

Jenkins' (1992) ethnography on TV fans argues that the media and other social groups police fan identification. For example, fans themselves are continually branded as scandalous fanatics. Rather than pathologizing fans, Jenkins argues by "poaching" various popular culture texts, fans actively produce their own non-mainstream cultures and fabricate communities. Jenkins considers that researchers get to know fan culture through examining the material signs of fan communities. Yet, rather than grasping fan culture in

its entirety, Jenkins argues that researchers only get to peek at very local and specific instances of fan culture.

Jenkins' (1992) analysis identifies five distinct, yet interconnected, dimensions of fan culture: "its relationship to a particular mode of reception; its role in encouraging viewer activism; its function as an interpretive community; its particular traditions of cultural production; its status as an alternative community" (pp. 2-3). By taking fans seriously, Jenkins, in utilizing de Certeau's work (1984), argues that as "textual poachers" television fans are active readers or participants in culture rather than passive receivers (see especially pp. 24-49). By making meaning, through mini-films and songs for example, fan texts for Jenkins sometimes reflect dominant ideology rather than being diametrically oppositional, as some cultural populists contend.[13]

Yet, some categories of fans are more socially acceptable than others. Jenkins for instance, argues sport fans are far more socially palatable than "Trekkies" (or more appropriately "Trekkers"), which he traces onto gender relations. To support this claim, Jenkins (1992) forwards that sports fans are mostly male who attach importance to only "real events rather than fictions" as compared to "media fans (who are mostly female and who attach great interest in debased forms of fiction)" (p. 19). Such an assertion concurs with Seagrave's (1993) analysis that argues sport hero-systems appeal only to immature males, together with Fiske's (1992) and Lewis' (1992) assertions that only males are involved in fan activity through sports culture.

However, as I have briefly outlined above, contemporary sport is inevitably filtered through the media, pointing to the limits of Jenkins' distinction between sport fans and media fans. For example, Wenner (1989) argues that the gossip that appears in women's magazines is comparable to hero talk in the sport pages. So much so, Wenner (1989) points out that sport chatter is: "legitimized gossip for men" (p. 15). Comparable to Jenkins' mediations on media fans, Guttmann (1978) also asserts that the sport fan is the "emotionally committed consumer of sports events" (p. 6). It is this emotional commitment for Guttmann (1978), which separates a fan from a spectator. Guttmann (1986) in a later book actually calls for more study in "mediated spectatorship" (p. 127).

Explicitly taking up Guttmann's request, Real and Mechikoff (1992), through utilising Geertz's (1973) concept of "deep play", argue that the media sports fan and the

sport event are comparable to the position of the ritual participant performing a mythic celebration (p. 323). Fan experience today however is not just produced by the face-to-face interaction illustrated in Geertz's Balinese cockfight, but by media technology and commercial advertising that contour public admittance to sports. With the televising of advents like the Olympics and the World Cup, Real and Mechikoff (1992) argue that there is now a transnational scale to fan participation. In making their insightful comments, Real and Mechikoff (1992) only speak to media sports fans as audiences for mediated sporting events, rather than considering how fans are often more particularised as hero worshippers. Again, Real and Mechikoff (1992) do not consider the sport fan phenomenon through the medium of the Internet, thus my examination of fans' websites adds to their considerations of sports fandom today. By looking at such sites, the assertion that sport fans are only adolescent or immature males could be assessed. For example, many of unofficial sites I have viewed indicate female authorship.

The popular allure of the sport hero is largely because people can readily identify with such an individual (Smith, 1973). Yet, this identification still requires choice, as Caughey (1984) asks:

> From out of thousands of glamorous alternatives, why does the fan seize on one particular figure rather than another? The appeal is often complex, but the admired figure is typically felt to have qualities that the person senses in himself [sic] but desires to develop further. The admired figure represents an ideal self-image. (p. 54)

Caughey (1984) further notes, that at least three types of fantasies intimately link the "individual *socially* with the admired figure" (p. 56, original emphasis). First, the individual meets the figure of worship. Second, the person becomes like the idol, and third, he or she becomes the idol. Such encounters for Caughey (1984) demonstrate the construction of a close and intimate social relationship. Jenkins (1992), as outlined above, also takes such fan identification seriously. Conceivably, individuals identifying with an object worship is precisely the initial step required to be a fan, which in turn leads to the production of different texts and the creation of alternative social communities.

In following Dyson's (1993) arguments (noted earlier) potentially Gomez's fans' identifications occur through his iconic status as the first Hispanic or Latino player to

make the NHL. Although as both the first "Hispanic" and first Alaskan to play in the NHL, Gomez is not just an icon for "Hispanics". Do fans only engage with Gomez as someone who is representative of certain identities and subjectivities? Conceivably, Gomez's fan identifications could occur because of similarities not just in race and ethnicity, but also through gender and sexual preference/s for example; or it could be because the athlete is playing a *particular* sport. Undoubtedly, identifications occur for a whole host of different reasons that bring fans together within towns or across nations. For example, the identification could be the result of sexual attraction or appreciation for the community work an athlete does in their hometown. Be like Gomez? Well, that depends on about which Gomez "we" are speaking! Thus, my analysis attempts to address what kinds of hero worship occur with Gomez and compare and contrast how these particular sports fans' fantasy identifications differ or are similar to Jenkins' TV fans

2.4 - Demarcating My Project: Neglected Fans, Cybersport, Media Texts and Transmitting the Hero

My brief examination of the historical meaning of heroism, together with an appreciation of fans and hero worship, highlights the pervasiveness of the hero and the complexity of the socio-construction of hero as a popular cultural form. My project looks to consider Scott Gomez as an emerging athlete hero within the PSI. As I argued previously the media saturate the PSI. The institutional practices of the media suture certain discourses to heroism in order to *sell* a story. For example, Whannel (1999) argues when speaking to athletes as media stars and heroes:

> All that most people know about these names has come from media representation.... One cannot 'know' them.... They are the points of convergences of multiple discourses; the focal point of utterances about moralities, masculinities, sporting ethics, national prestige, and so on. (p. 258)

Yet, fans, according to Jenkins (1992), through raiding media texts also create their own cultural artefacts, representations and virtual communities. Thus, fans articulate the hero to different discourses. This is not to say that the form or ideals associated with the hero are consistent and/or timeless. Like Vande Berg (1998) I am more interested in: "the

changing nature of heroism as featured in the contemporary American sports media" (p. 134) and more generally, the persistence of constructing heroes across the PSI.

Harris' (1994) research that interviewed Greensboro youth on their hero choices is an important study that opens up how heroism has been studied both within sport studies and within more general academic research. It is important because, as Harris (1994) points out, little empirical work has been conducted that appraises what the "general public might think" (p. 103) about heroism. Harris' study aimed to resolve the dilemma (within the press and academic research) regarding the continued existence of heroes in American society that began around the 1950s and remains today.[14] My work, through examining the artefacts of online fandom is sensitive to Harris' plea for work on heroes to be cognisant of audiences. However in framing what fans "do" with Gomez through online gossip and website construction, I offer no speculations of how Gomez's fans think or extrapolate to speculate how the "general public might think". I am not sure who the "general public" are or what they think. I merely want to examine fan gossip and website construction in order to consider what fans produce through their identifications with Gomez. Examining these texts arguably engages with what McDaniel and Sullivan (1998) call the interactive medium of *cybersport*.

One way to contemplate heroism today is to consider its medium of transmission (from oral to print culture). As previously detailed, Boorstin (1962), Drucker and Cathcart, (1994), Strate, (1994) and Vande Berg (1998) hypothesize that meanings, forms and functions of heroes are tied to their medium of transmission. My work through looking at media texts and online texts conceivably is both attached to and extends this hypothesis. Given my contentions outlined with Vande Berg's work, I am cognisant that continuity and change regarding the form and functions of the hero could be apparent with the different Gomez narratives.

Moreover, as indicated above, the conditions and contexts of the transmission are also salient. By taking into account the socio-historical context, what kind of cultural signpost is Gomez? As outlined, the hero is an ethical and/or political exemplar to selves, and is often considered as representative of/for something. In turn the hero is variously articulated with discourses of gender, colonialism, ethnicity, nationhood, sexuality, ability, age and so on.

My analysis, partially following Jamieson's (1998) methodological recommendations for her examination of a number of texts dealing with the golfer Nancy Lopez, seeks to use a variety of media texts on Gomez. Jamieson (1998), although not extending her analysis to consider fan-produced texts, argues this diversifies one's commentary to include non-dominant popular texts rarely examined within social-cultural analyses of sport. The narratives I read are from the *NYT* and *SI* and *ADN*. I use the *NYT* due to its status as mainstream national (American) newspaper, *SI* because it is a widely read American sports magazine and *ADN* because it is the main local newspaper of Gomez's hometown (Anchorage, Alaska). By looking at different texts, this project wants to consider how Gomez is nuanced for different audiences/groups. A further way to consider Gomez is to look at how fans produce and consume Scott Gomez's image through various websites. Specifically I highlight two websites: Gomez's official home site along with Kelly and Julie's Gomez sites.[15] As detailed previously, there are a number of websites devoted to Gomez, but I choose two sites to focus my analyses and because of the differences between the sites. The "official" site is professionally designed by a marketing firm in Alaska and is run by Gomez's "official fan club"; whereas the latter is an "unauthorised" site designed by fans.[16]

Prior to considering the variety of texts in circulation about Gomez today, more explicit attention needs to be given to my theoretical orientations and methodological indicators of my project. Hopefully by now, my theoretical sensibilities, including my interest in representation, cultural and media studies are apparent. The next chapter takes up this requirement.

NOTES

[1] Much of the work reviewed on the hero within this review (including: Boorstin, 1962; Drucker and Cathcart, 1994; Strate, 1994 and Vande Berg, 1998) whilst tying the hero to the communication medium of transmission (from oral to print culture) often neglects the politics of representation. Yet, this work does *imply* the question of representation. For example, when the all the above authors in some shape or form include and exclude certain people from their hero lists they engage in the question of representation. In addition, the issue of representation is also apparent when researchers speak for and on behalf of someone or something (a certain value, for example). Whannel's (1992, 1998) arguments further point out that the hero is a key strategy used by sports media organisations to win and maintain audiences; in turn this implies that "the hero" is a key practice used by the media to make sport meaningful. The construction of meaning is integral to both understanding culture and representation. Both the politics and the poetics of representation are discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 3.

[2] Other oppositions and similarities are posed in discussing Vande Berg (1998).

[3] That is, in heroic societies like that depicted in Homer's epics, together with Icelandic and Irish sagas (MacIntyre, 1985). For a fuller discussion of MacIntrye's arguments with reference to the athlete hero see Capon (1998).

[4] For Boorstin (1962), the Graphic Revolution started with the development of the printing press prior to 1900. From 1900 onwards Boorstin further links the manufacturing of fame to TV, radio, cinema, newspapers and magazines. Boorstin (1962) argues that technological changes enabled the proliferation of shallow stars that were merely recognised for their "well-knownness" rather than their heroic greatness (p. 47).

[5] According to Turner, Bonner and Marshall (2000), the key indication of celebrity status is at the point when interest is shown in someone's private life. This hypothesis would thus suggest any athlete hero in today's media who is positioned within their private life has achieved celebrity status. Potentially then, and in following Smith's (1973) assertions too, by becoming celebrity, athletes lose their heroic credentials. Drucker and Cathcart (1994), however, argue, as detailed within my text, that all heroes today are necessarily celebrities

[6] Ice is used on purpose here: because in *my* life there is hockey and well, there is hockey!

[7] Notable exceptions include: Jamieson (1998) and Mariscal (1999) who both consider racial and ethnic stereotyping of Latinas and Latinos athletes within the print and broadcast media. Other researchers who have commented on "Hispanic" stereotyping within their larger examination of socio-cultural differences include: Hoose (1989), Melnick and Sabo (1994) and Davies and Harris (1998).

[8] "Fan netzines" (my own term as far as I know) refers to fanzines that are available on the Internet.

[9] One of first theorists to discuss extensively the idea of a virtual community was Howard Rheingold, is not included in Mitra's consideration. Rheingold (1993) posited virtual communities as: "social aggregations that emerge from the Net when enough people carry on ...public discussion long enough, with sufficient human feeling, to form webs of personal relationships in cyberspace" (p. 5).

[10] http://www.google.com

[11] In sequential order (all http://) - www.scottygomez.com; www.newjerseydevils.com; www.latinolegendsinsport.com; www.geocites.com/tif1723/home.html; www.geocites.com/scott_gomez/; www.geocites.com/scott23gomez/; www.geocities.com/sgomez23/

[12] For the *NYT* website see – http://www.nytimes.com; For the *ADN* website see - http://www.adn.com. For the *SI* website see – http://www.sportsillustrated.cnn.com.

[13] This latter point is further considered within cultural studies analyses of popular culture, considered in the next chapter.

[14] My commentary on the "death of the hero" with reference to mediated celebrityhood is salient here (as detailed previously).

[15] http: www.scottygomez.com and www.geocites.com/scott_gomez/

[16] I place "official" here in quotation marks to highlight that interest in Gomez has generated both official and unofficial websites. Such terminology is not my own, as the official site proclaims this status; whereas unofficial sites display disclaimers, explaining how they are not legally attached to Scott Gomez. I compare and contrast two sites in order to address possible differences in fan production and the fans themselves.

CHAPTER 3 : TEXTUAL STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

Beyond a strict methodology, this textual strategies and tactics section seeks to highlight my theoretical orientations. As I outlined in the previously, my project looks to consider Scott Gomez as an emerging athlete hero across the PSI through a representational analysis of both mass media narratives and fan-produced texts. Prior to outlining my cultural, Chicana/o, and postcolonial studies sensibilities, I want to question methodology through Barthes' (1971) comments on method:

> Some speak greedily and urgently about method. It never seems rigorous or formal enough to them. Method becomes Law, but as this Law is deprived of any effect that would be outside of itself (no one can say, in the "human sciences," what a "result" is) it always falls short .... As a result, a work that unceasingly declares its will-to-methodology always becomes sterile in the end. Everything takes place inside the method, nothing is left to the "writing,".... The searcher [*sic*] repeats that his text will be methodological, but this text never arrives. There is nothing more sure to kill research and sweep it off into the leftovers of abandoned works, nothing more sure, than method. At some point one has to turn against method, or at least to treat it without any founding privilege. (pp. 9-10)

Barthes speaks to a restlessness of writing here and urges researchers not necessarily to abandon method, but to treat it with at least with a good dose of scepticism. By restlessness, I refer to Barthes' request not to prescribe everything in advance, but leave something to the "writing" of research. In addition, by tightly imposing a methodology far in advance to writing, arguably, research becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Writing a textual strategies and tactics section is my attempt at Barthesian scepticism. In so doing I make little attempt to separate the so-called theory from the methodology, as I view both as ways of reading and approaching the Gomez texts.

I use the words strategies and tactics in reference to de Certeau's (1984) *The Practice of Everyday Life*. De Certeau rejects "strategy" preferring "tactic" instead. Strategy for de Certeau (1984) acknowledges force relationships; that is, when "a subject of will and power (a proprietor, an enterprise, a city, a scientific institution)" bracket off an "object" from its environment (p. xix). De Certeau is thus stressing that strategies are bound to a spatial location. Despite tactics also retaining military connotations, more positively de Certeau argues that tactics refer to the art of doing things. Rather than oc-

cupying space, tactics rely on time and are thus mobile. Such qualities mean that tactics cannot be fully calculated. Tactics for de Certeau (1984) belong to the "weak" or "the other" who manipulate events when the opportunity arises (p. xix). As tactical modes of operations, de Certeau argues that everyday practices such as talking, reading and shopping allow temporary cultural victories for the less powerful over the more powerful. De Certeau's (1984) thesis here is indebted to Foucault (1980) who posits that the formations of discourses need to be understood, not as types of consciousness or as ideology per se, but through the careful mapping of the tactics and strategies of power within such matrices of organisations and knowledge. I employ tactics and strategies as both a means to approach the fan and media texts of Gomez (see later discussion), and to theorise my work more generally.

My retention of strategy is to acknowledge my researcher's role; that is, I want to forefront my own complicity in producing knowledge within an academia. By complicity, I evoke Hutcheon's (1989) "complicitous critique". Such a critique acknowledges that even if research focuses on interrupting dominant cultural artefacts by noticing the work of representation, it still coincides with knowledge production that is bound to power relations. Beyond power relations complicit with the university, I further want to highlight that despite noble intentions not to "bracket off" certain objects from their environments, given the complexity of both the social and cultural, my work necessarily does this. By acknowledging such factors, I want to point to and open up the seams and articulations of my representational strategies, yet at the same time recognise their complicity with the notion of transparency of representation (see Hutcheon, 1989, p. 18).

In considering qualitative research within physical education and sport today, Sparkes (1995) implicitly echoes Hutcheon's (1989) sentiments when he says: "[n]o textual staging can ever be innocent" (p. 159). Like Sparkes (1995), I recognise my story about Scott Gomez and the textual strategies (and tactics) it employs has both political implications and moral consequences. For example, I include some information to the expense of other information; in making speculations about Gomez and his fans, to some extent "my" story speaks for "them".

My own ideological identities in choosing Scott Gomez to study, as Ingham, Howell and Swetman (1993) argue are also profoundly telling.[1] Not only am I a hockey

player, but also a woman from a racially and ethnically mixed background (my mother is both white and Irish/English, my father is both black and English); and I currently live between two cultures (that of England and Canada). Thus, my "choice" of Scott Gomez as a hockey player who seemingly exists between cultures and thus not really "belonging" anywhere has a number of personal reverberations. Denzin (1998) more emphatically states: "[t]he Other who is presented in the text is always a version of the researcher's self" (p. 319). My desire to place myself complicitly within the text is not to confess or privilege my "Authorship" as the final determinant of meaning, but merely to acknowledge myself as an embodied researcher within the process of cultural interpretation (Bloom, 1999). Barthes (1977) forwards that texts more generally, and I extrapolate this observation to "my" text, do not emit a kind of single "theological" or "Author-God" meaning, rather "a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash" (p. 146).

My researcher's role is further faceted by the fact I am a hockey player and fan. Thus, I not only consider myself as researcher quite peripheral to transparently explaining my text, but as a fan, I blur author/reader roles. Jenkins (1992) also notes the messiness of plural roles when he posits that he writes both as a fan and as an academic when researching fan culture. Jenkins' dual positioning seeks to negotiate both ideological criticism as an academic, and affirm the pleasures of fandom also marked within popular texts. Conceivably my researcher role, through borrowing and mixing certain texts and utilising them in different ways, operates comparably to the textual poachers Jenkins (1992) highlights.[2]

Arguably, my fan/academic knowledge production is both a tactical and strategic operation. Tactical as I am a hockey fan and by taking fan production seriously, my research does or makes things in "other" ways, thus questioning dominant culture/s. For example, by turning my conclusion into a website I want to remove my work from the university library and connect with other online fans of Gomez. Consequently, de Certeau's (1984) binary separation of tactics and strategies is somewhat problematised here: as my research could be regarded as both strategic and tactical. To some extent, my plural roles highlight the "crisis of representation" for social research today (see Denzin and Lincoln, 1998). For example, where does my researcher status end and my fan status

begin? Thus, where does the object of my research end and the subject of my research begin? As my above sentiments indicate I do not proposes solutions to such epistemological and ontological problems, rather I just want to underscore the representational issues of my project, that in turn infer some of the difficulties facing the production and evaluation of all interpretive social research today.

3.1 - Introducing Cultural Studies: Sport, Popular Culture and the Hero

> The meaning of a cultural form and its place or position in the cultural field is not fixed once and forever .... The meaning of a cultural symbol is given in part by the social field into which it is incorporated, the practices with which it is articulated and is made to resonate. (Hall, 1981a, p. 449)

> Sport is neither completely separate from everyday life; nor is it quite ordinary life as usual. Rather, the two leak into each other on particular and specific occasions; and where they do, we're called upon to exercise line calls, to make decisions and interpretations. (Miller and McHoul, 1998, p. 89)

Mediated heroes in sport do not exist in isolation from the world. Rather, heroic construction is very much a part of popular cultural artefacts more generally through films, TV, novels, advertisements and comics (Fishwick, 1972; Grixti, 1994). After Boorstin (1962), I consider employ "event" to note the staged production of the hero today, through mediated publicity mechanisms. Hence, I consider Gomez as athlete hero as a "popular cultural event" who articulates in a constellatory manner with other popular narratives of heroism and other social discourses. This expression is partially inspired by Vande Berg's (1998) phrase: "heroes as cultural phenomena" and Bennett and Woolacott's (1987) expression: "Bond as popular hero". My use of event further resonates with Hall's concept of cultural symbol. Event, as a noun, from the Chambers Dictionary (1997) is "anything that happens" or "contingency, possibility of occurrence". Hall (1981a) considers that meanings of cultural symbols are partially provided by the articulated combination of practices and social fields. Such fluid combinations are neither permanently secured nor totally random. Rather there are structured relations between articulated parts that leak out into relations of dominance and subordination within the field/s of popular culture. Such power plays within popular culture include Hall's

(1981a) insistence on class struggle, but sexuality, gender, race, nationhood, ethnicity and so on are also part of the labour for/in popular culture. Thus, event and Hall's (1981a) cultural symbol both evoke contingency *and* randomness of social relations. Hall's concept of articulation and of "Marxism without Guarantees", which I detail later, is integral to my understanding of thinking through Gomez in this manner. Although, rather than considering such relations as merely symbolic fields or signifying structures producing meaning within language, after Foucault (1980) I consider events as relations of power, that manifest themselves and interconnect through the practices of strategies and tactics.

The word "popular" in connection to culture remains highly contentious (for example see, Hall, 1981a; Fiske, 1991; Kellner, 1995; MacCabe, 1986; Miller and McHoul, 1998; Morris, 1998; and Storey, 1994). I use the word with reference to de Certeau's (1984) work. Attempting to avoid the problem of vaguely speaking about "the masses" or "the people", de Certeau particularises popular culture, if rather broadly, to the art of doing, in that people re-make everyday practices like shopping, reading, talking, cooking or even renting an apartment. Renting for de Certeau (1984) actually:

> transforms another person's property into a space borrowed for a moment by a transient. Renters make comparable changes in an apartment they furnish with their acts and memories; as do speakers, in the language into which they insert both the messages of their native tongue and, through their accent, through their own "turns of phrase" etc., their own history. (p. xxi)

Renting for de Certeau operates as a fundamental metaphor to the "art of doing" and "making over" of popular culture. De Certeau's "art of doing" could be extended to consider how people make and remake other mass cultural artefacts, such as films, records, clothes and sport. Fiske (1991) argues, for example, that although shopping malls are designed strategically for commerce, teenagers who congregate in such spaces make trysts and display their personal styles to one another, temporarily take over the dominant meaning of the shopping mall (pp. 40-41). As such, de Certeau (1984) stresses that: "members of popular culture cannot gain control of the production of culture, they do control its consumption – the ways in which it is used" (cited in Turner, 1996, p. 199). In tactically doing things people, rather than being passive cultural dupes, respond to and contest public representations (Morris, 1998).

De Certeau's (1984) tactical model considers power in a "bottom up" manner with everyday people taking temporary control through the way they use things. Jenkins (1992) through his commentary on fans as textual poachers remarks that these re-makings of mass culture, rather than being just transient tactical operations (like the temporary "renting" de Certeau considers), actually produce material artefacts, consequently offering a more permanent culture. Thus, my understanding of popular culture is cognisant of both people's actions through their acts of "doing" or practices, together with the production or making of artefacts.

One of the most affirmative outcomes of a commitment to popular culture is a break with those binary formulations of culture that rely on producer/consumer, elite/mass, or high/low distinctions (MacCabe, 1986). Although this is not to suggest "the popular" remains unproblematic, however conceived, I aim not to consider fan producers or their productions in an uncritical or celebratory manner. Rather following Jenkins' (1992) re-formulation of de Certeau's work, I approach fan texts as neither totally reflective of dominant ideology nor diametrically oppositional (see Chapter 2). Like Hall (1981a), I consider popular culture as neither purely corrupt nor wholly authentic but contradictorily characterised by "the double movement of containment and resistance, which is always inevitably inside it" (p. 443). Such understandings of culture resonate with Kellner's (1995) definition of culture as a participatory activity, which I used within Chapter 1, despite his explicit rejection of "the popular".

By attempting to circumnavigate the binary of dominance *or* resistance, Jenkins (1992) is implicitly reacting to the charge of uncritical cultural populism. Cultural populism, outlined by McGuigan (1992), is a term coined to criticise the work of Fiske and other theorists for romanticising the "resistance" available to audiences and consumers, at the neglect of the broader context of the material relations of production. Moreover, Morris (1996) criticises cultural studies in the 1980s in its over production of deterministic ideological critiques. These "banal" articles for Morris (1996) seemingly derived from a master-disk in an English publisher's vault: "from which thousands of versions of the same article about pleasure, resistance, and the politics of consumption are being run off under different names with minor variations" (p. 156). Through utilising Jenkins (1992), my project attempts to avoid the complete romanticising of fan producers.

I deploy cultural studies as the analytical tool to understand popular culture. I take cultural studies as an umbrella term that broadly refers to the study of popular culture (Storey, 1998). Historically cultural studies as a "proper name" refers to the "British tradition", deriving from the work of Raymond Williams and Richard Hoggart through to a number of other cultural critics, including Stuart Hall, at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at Birmingham University (Grossberg, 1993a).[3] This "British" appreciation of cultural studies, although diverse in its operations, entailed a commitment to Marxism[4], cultural politics and/or critical theory. Yet, cultural studies since the 1980s has spread and diversified, both in its locations of practice, for example, from: Canada to Australia; and its interests, for example from: feminism to psychoanalysis (see the historical reviews of cultural studies by Grossberg, 1993a/b; Hall, 1992a; and Straw, 1993).

Alasuutari (1995) argues that cultural studies used as a methodology can be most usefully described as: "a crossroads, the arrival, through the application of concepts from various disciplines, at a shared view that it is useful to study cultural distinctions and meaning systems from the point of view of both actors and structures" (p. 36). Rather than the metaphor of arrival, I view cultural studies as a contested terrain, always in process and transition. More specifically, I employ cultural studies as an area of research that is attentive to cultural practices in relation to power within their socio-political contexts. My project is also sensitive to the interruption of cultural studies (within the CCCS) by the linguistic turn, or what Hall (1992a) terms "the discovery of discursivity, of textuality" (p. 283). Hall's (1992a) linguistic turn, noted: the salience of language and the linguistic metaphor to studying culture; the acknowledgment of the contradiction that although text and textuality are sources of meaning, they also escape, postpone and exceed meaning; and the appreciation (after Foucault) that language and representations are sites of power, regulation and ideology, as well as sites for the construction of identities.

Through this literary turn, I consider my role as researcher or cultural critic, akin to being a literary critic. As critic, I utilise the idea of critique rather than criticism. According to Eagleton (1991, p. xiv), and unlike criticism that assumes a disinterested vantage point outside the text, critique takes up a position within the object. As hockey fan, and through my own personal investments in this project, I place myself within, rather than outside the text (as detailed previously). That is not to say that I occupy one place,

but rather plural positionalities. Consequently, the divisions between reader/writer, critic/text, academic/fan and subject/object are blurred within this project. Furthermore, Johnson (1996) has stressed the salience of critique to ("British") cultural studies more generally: "critique involves stealing away the more useful elements and rejecting the rest. From this point of view cultural studies is a process, a kind of alchemy for producing knowledge" (p. 75). Inspired by cultural studies sensibilities, my textual interpretation is framed around the poetics and politics of representation, and is cognisant with Hall's concept of articulation.

3.2 – Producing Meaning and Re-producing Power: Conceptualising Articulation

My analysis seeks to be sensitive to Hall's concept of articulation.[5] I use this concept as a means to theorise the connections between and within fans (or audiences) and texts, together with their intersections with other discourses. Grossberg (1993b) further points out that Hall's idea of articulation moves: "cultural studies on from thinking about models of communication (production-text-consumption; encoding-decoding) to a theory of contexts" (p. 4). Grossberg's (1993b) sentiments have sympathy with Jenkins (1992) recommendations that fan researchers need to be attentive to the particularities of critical reception, historical context and social-cultural circumstances. I also employ articulation more generally as a way to think about social-cultural relations and the constitution of cultural identities. Moreover, Slack (1996) not only points out that articulation is a key concept for cultural studies generally, but considers it a method, or more appropriately a practice for doing cultural analysis.

Articulation etymologically speaking means both to express, that is to be distinct or different, and to join. Hall (1980) uses this concept to speak to this etymological play of both meanings, and drawing on the work of Althusser together with Laclau, argues:

> an articulation between two modes of production, the one "capitalist" in the true sense, the other only "formally" so: the two combined through an articulating principle, mechanism or set of relations, because, as Marx observed, "its beneficiaries participate in a world market in which the dominant productive sectors are already capitalist". That is, the object of inquiry must be treated as a complex articulated structure which is, itself, "structured in dominance". (p. 320)

Hall's (1980) initial formulation of articulation though privileging class, further argues that other social formation registers (like race, gender, political and ideological structures) also play roles in the production of social formations and thus in reproduction of power relations. A "unity" formed by articulation is considered by Hall (1980) a "complex structure", where things relate both through "their differences as through their similarities" (p. 325). This "articulated combination", a kind of production in use, is not permanently or inevitably secured, neither is it a fully random association. Instead, there are structured relations between articulated parts, that is, there are relations of dominance and subordination. Furthermore, implicitly Hall (1980) is attaching articulation to Gramsci's concept of hegemony too, and as Edwards (2001) argues: "ideology must be considered the key site of struggle over articulations" (p. 59; see Hall, 1980, p. 332).

Within a later article, Hall's (1985) negotiations between Marx, Althusser, Gramsci and poststructualism, are made more obvious with reference to signification, representation and ideology. Hall's (1985) introduction embraces Althusser's work as it provides him with the means to think between difference and unity ("unity in difference") by paratactically considering both through the concept of articulation. Not only is Hall (1985) writing partially against Foucault here, whom he accuses along with other poststructuralist theorists of making not only a shift from practice to discourse but:

> how the emphasis on difference – on the perpetual slippage of meaning, on the endless sliding of the signifier – is now pushed beyond the point where it is capable of theorizing the necessary unevenness of a complex unity, or even the unity in difference of a complex structure. (p. 92)

Hall (1985) continues to argue for an "arbitrary fixing" and "chains of equivalence", or what he terms articulation, without which he contends, there would be no meaning or signification at all (p. 93).

Hall (1985) again uses Althusser's thesis (indebted to Lacan and Freud) that ideology, via the mechanism of interpellation or hailing, functions through the category of the subject. Accordingly, the "I" of ideological statements is not only constituted, but the ideological statements produce or interpellate us as subjects for discourse. Hall (1985) prefaces this argument with the rejoinder: "[t]his subject is not to be confused with lived historical individuals" (p. 102). Yet given his arguments it is difficult to maintain the dif-

ference between the "I" of ideological discourses and the "I" of so-called lived materiality. After all, if meaning can only be understood as processes of ideological discourses, how can "I" have functioning outside of ideology or discourse?

Hall (1985) attempts to answer my questions by considering ideology via Althusser's *For Marx* (1969) and the less considered first part of Althusser's *Ideological State Apparatus* essay that considers the reproduction of social relations of production, rather than just the interpellation of subjects. Althusser (1969) considers ideologies as systems of representation consisting of: "concepts, ideas, myths, or images – in which men and women ... live their imaginary relations to the real conditions of existence" (cited in Hall, 1985, p. 103). Systems of representation refer to the systems of meaning that are used to make the world intelligible and ideological knowledge comes about through the practices involved in meaning making (Hall, 1985, ibid). Consequently, Hall (1985) is arguing that Althusser (1969) is acknowledging both the discursive and semiotic and so he asks: "if there are no social practices outside of the domain of meaning (semiotic), are *all* practices simply discourses?" (ibid, original emphasis).

To paraphrase Hall's (1985) argument: ideas materialise within and inform social practices, so the social is not outside of the semiotic or social practices, neither is the interplay of meaning and representation is consequently not outside of ideology. Yet, it does not follow that: "because all social practices are within the discursive, there is nothing to social practice *but* discourse" (ibid, original emphasis). Hall considers that even though all practices are inscribed with ideology they position themselves quite differently to ideology. For example, the media potentially can change the field of representation itself and thus stand quite differently to people who are producing and reproducing the world through material commodities. Hall (1985) is keen then to retain that ideologies are "systems of representation materialized in practices" (p. 104).

The key issue here is systems of representation in the plural, as there are a number of them within any social formation. Ideologies for Hall (1985) are not single ideas, rather: "they operate, in discursive chains, in clusters, in semantic chains, in discursive formations. As you enter an ideological field and pick one nodal representation or idea, you immediately trigger off a whole chain of connotative associations" (ibid). Consequently, the idea of dominant relations versus subordinate relations does not do justice to

the "complex interplay of different ideological discourses and formations in any modern developed society" (ibid). This latter point indicates that Hall (1985) has changed the concept of articulation from his earlier (1980) consideration. Hall (1980), as previously addressed, considered articulation as precisely those structured articulated relations of dominance and subordination; whereas Hall (1985) is arguing for a more complex understanding of social relations with the discursive chains contesting one another as systems of differences, rather than just sustaining and self referencing one another through systems of equivalences.

In understanding the latter part Althusser's quote, that is, how people "live their imaginary relations to the real conditions of existence" (p. 103), Hall (1985) speaks of the: "no necessary correspondence between the conditions of a social relation or practice and the number of different ways in which it can be represented" (p.104). Living implies experience, and for Hall (1985) it is through systems of representation that we come to know the world, thus we do not "experience" outside of the schemas of representation. Consequently, there is no outside, no way of experiencing "real" social relations outside of these schemas. Yet, Hall argues that some ideological schemas may provide us with more insightful knowledge of specific relations than others (although he fails to elaborate on this idea). Althusser (1969) argues that there is no direct correspondence between the conditions of social existence and how we live or experience them, thus he describes these relations as "imaginary".[6] Hall (1985) agrees that social practices cannot be conceived outside of representing material conditions to ourselves, yet he maintains: "the representations do not exhaust their effect[s]" (p. 105).

Althusser's Marxism reworked through Gramsci, psychoanalysis and discourse theory certainly addresses the importance of the self as subject within ideological discourse, something woefully missing from previous Marxist models. Yet, Hall (1985) questions whether this translates to a sufficient "theory of ideology in social formations" (p. 107). Hall (1985) further doubts that Althusser's structuralist model that so effectively attaches ideology to the social formation allows for the production of its opposite or even a partial contradiction (p. 99).

By way of explanation, Hall in an autobiographical moment, explains how being hailed as "black", "Negro", "West Indian", "coloured" or "immigrant" takes on different

connotations between two countries, namely Jamaica and England, or even between different people within a country. For example, whereas Jamaica has a more nuanced racial classification system where coloured means being from a mixed family and thus somewhat more socially respectable; England instead operates through a binary system of white and non-white. As a "lived individual" Hall points out that none of those interpellations exhaust him and neither is he just one of labels, though maybe he has been all of them at one time of another. Hence Hall (1985) concludes: "there is no essential, unitary I – only the fragmentary, contradictory subject I become" (p. 109). Contradictions (and thus changes) within the ideological field are not permitted by Althusser's functionalist and deterministic: "always-already" in that "we are spoken by and spoken for" (Hall, 1985, p. 109) by a number of ideological discourses prior to birth.

Hall's (1985) point is just because people are in certain ideological categories does not necessarily mean they exhibit a narrow pre-determined range of consciousness. For example, black people, as well as whites may well be exploiters of black labour, just as the working class in England could be supporters of conservative politics. The points of articulation between race, ethnicity, class, gender (and so on) together with prevailing consciousness, rather than being mono-causally determined are brought about by the process of overdetermination, rather than determination. Hall (1985) employs overdetermination (a term borrowed from Althusser) with reference to continual articulation of certain structures with particular practices, which in turn tend to characterise a particular social formation at a given moment in time and space. Practices may well be incorporated to reflect and reproduce certain structures of dominance. For example, many disparate sports in Victorian England underwent a fundamental transformation from codification, rationalisation and bureaucratisation by the middle classes. Although many sports retained their obvious playing differences and regional distinctions, their incorporation into league structures and transformation into rule-bound activities, also indicate a comparable institutionalisation and homogenisation.

Hall's (1985) development of articulation, (or the temporary fixings between and within practices, discourses and institutions is thus attached to a consideration of ideology), argues for the consideration of the "limits" to how society reproduces itself through social relations. Rather than considering ideologies as always-already inscribed, follow-

ing Volosinov (1973), Hall (1985) argues for their historical specificity as well as attention to the shifts in accentuation in language and articulations. Volosinov (1973), as noted by Storey (1996), argues that meaning is derived by the context of articulation, as such cultural texts and practices are; "multiaccentual; that is, they can be articulated with different accents by different people in different contexts" (p. 4). Thus meaning falls within the realm of social production, as work needs to be done in order to make the world meaningful. Hence, Storey (1996) highlights that practices, events or texts are not so much the issuing source of meaning, rather, the sites of conflict where various articulated meanings can occur. Hence, popular culture rather than being a site where meanings per se are fought over becomes the site where the relations or articulations between meanings are salient. It is the suturing together of disparate things – for example, cultural practices, with *particular* political positions, identities, discourses, structures and contexts, at specific historical moments – that is involved in Hall's articulation and the making of meaning.[7] As such, we need to ask: what conditions allow these links to occur? How are they sustained? How are they overthrown?

Hall (1986a) more explicitly links his articulation concept to post-marxism.[8] Ideology is linked to articulation again and more neutrally theorised as: "the systems of representation – which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of, define, figure out and render intelligible the way society works" (Hall, 1986a, p. 29). Through combing the works of Althusser, Laclau, Marx and Gramsci, Hall (1986a) calls for "no guarantees", that is no necessary correspondence between the economic base and the ideological superstructure; between one level of a social formation or another; or between the ideology of a class and the position that class holds with reference to capitalist economic relations. Yet, "no guarantees" for Hall (1986a) should not be conflated to "no necessary non-correspondence" (as also noted by Hall, 1985)

Hall (1986b) more specifically addresses postmodernism in an interview edited by Grossberg. Articulation is considered with more explicit reference to discourse, and is worth quoting at length:

> [t]he so-called "unity" of a discourse is really the re-articulated in different ways because they have no necessary belongingness. The unity which matters is a linkage between that articulated discourse and the social

> forces with which it can, under certain historical conditions, but need not necessarily be connected. Thus, a theory of articulation is both a way of understanding how ideological elements come, under certain conditions, to cohere together within a discourse ....[and] .... asks how an ideology discovers its subject ....[I]t enables us to think how an ideology empowers people, enabling them to begin to make some sense or intelligibility of their historical situation. (Hall, 1986b, p. 53)

The above quotation highlights how Hall (1986b) is explicitly arguing for the need for articulation in order for people to make sense of the world. Rather than replacing ideology with the concept of discourse, as Foucault does, Hall (1986b) maintains the need to think of articulation as the ideological fixing of meaning within and between discourses.

Hall (1986b) questions Baudrillard's postmodern implosion of meaning which entails the end of representational practices, thus signification. Hall (1986b) points out the notable difference between arguing against a final absolute meaning versus that no meaning exists. Citing Benjamin, Hall (1986b) suggests semantic raids: "to find the fragments, decipher their assembly and see how you can make a surgical cut into them, assembling and reassembling the means and instruments of cultural production" (p. 49).[9]

Hall (1986b) does not totally reject postmodernism, rather he suggests some circumnavigation around certain postmodern polemicists. Postmodernism is not considered as an epochal break with modernity, but a name given to reflect on how: "old [modernist] certainties began to run into trouble from the 1900s onwards" (Hall, 1986b, p. 47). Postmodernity for Hall (1986b) is an intensification of processes, like diversity and fragmentation, that modernism first tried to grapple with, but have now: "penetrated more deeply into mass consciousness" (p. 50). In thinking through postmodernism as a theoretical tool to understand the world, Hall (1986b) affirms that: "the great discourses of classical Reason, and of the rationalist actor or subject are much weaker in their explanatory power now" (p. 51). Accordingly, Hall (1986b) implicitly theorises a need for postmodernism as a critical method to relate to modern life, or as he puts it: coming to terms with modernity's limits.

However, the other target of Hall's (1986b) critique with regards to postmodern and poststructural thinking is Foucault. Hall questions Foucault's total commitment to

discourse and concomitant neglect of ideology. Before examining Hall's (1986b) commentary, it is worth considering some of what Foucault has written about ideology.

Foucault (1980) argues that the ("Marxist") notion of ideology is difficult to utilise as: (1.) ideology seemingly stands in opposition to truth, unlike discourse which Foucault argues considers how "historically the effects of truth are produced" (p. 118), i.e. regimes of truth, and thus does not concern itself with issues of truth and falseness;[10] (2.) ideology for Foucault necessitates a consideration of the "order of the subject" (ibid); and (3.) ideology functions only in reference to its material economic determinant. Accordingly, Foucault (1980) argues: "[f]or these three reasons, I think this is a notion that cannot be used without circumspection" (ibid). Foucault (1980) also further rejects ideology as a mode of consciousness in favour of the analysis of discourses and genealogies of knowledge in terms of "tactics and strategies of power" (p. 77). No doubt, Foucault is setting up ideology in a very particular way in order to dismiss it, yet it does not appear from his commentary he completely rules out the concept.

Hall's previous modifications to ideology, through his idea of articulation, have addressed some of Foucault's concerns. Articulation and discourse for Hall (1986b) are both productive movements away from the linear base/superstructure model. Accordingly, Hall (1986b) claims that his notion of "dominance in ideology" is comparable to Foucault's discursive regime, where the operation of power is conducted through the processes of normalisation, regulation and surveillance.

In making his case, Hall (1986b), however, uses Foucault's idea of power in a very particular way. Foucault (1980) does not just consider power only as a prohibitive or negative force, rather through thinking about "what makes power hold good" he argues that power: "produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse ... [it is] a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression" (p. 119). Arguably, Foucault is only rejecting power as a repressive force, only through the idea that power originates in a top-down manner from a prohibitive law or as necessarily possessed by someone. This is not the same as saying Foucault denies power can have repressive effects or that there are relations of force within social formations, as Hall (1986b) notes. Foucault's arguments about power shift our attention from thinking about where power originates, to the

effects of power (potentially both repressive and productive). Foucault further considers how power, as the relations of forces, exercised through networks, is sustained. Productively, rather than a descending analysis of power, Foucault is advocating an ascending analysis that pays attention to the micro-mechanisms of power within everyday life.

It is Foucault's conception of power as productive, together with the adage "where there is power, there is resistance", to which Hall (1986b) is resistant.[11] Hall (1986b) maintains that Foucault's "proto-anarchist position" entails that his resistance "must be summoned from no-where" which in turn requires the evasion of the question around "the constitution of dominance in ideology" (p. 48). As Chen (1996) points out, by Hall making such statements he is (re-)adopting a traditional Marxist top-down notion of power. As outlined by Chen (1996) Foucault articulates: "power as the *relation* of (confrontational) forces, always multiple and multidirectional" (p. 313, emphasis added). The point here is *relation*, so resistance only partially comprises power relations. Resistance is not guaranteed to win, but it: "designates the forces against the dominant" (Chen, 1996, p. 313). Thus, resistance comes fruitfully from everywhere, not no-where (Chen, 1996).

Just as power for Foucault is not traced onto a subject as sovereign agent, neither is resistance. This implies that heterogeneous resistances that although are not centralised practices against the dominant, remain attached and intelligible to specific articulation within a social formation. Foucault's understanding of power can only be understood through the interrelation between resistance and dominance, which I would trace onto strategies and tactics (after de Certeau, 1984), yet the opposition between them is contingent. Foucault's reformulation of power attempts to circumnavigate the binary opposition of domination and resistance, as this logic merely re-inscribes the "strong party" (Chen, 1996, p. 313). Given that Foucault (1979) is stressing that resistance does not operate outside of power, and vice versa, to suggest he is setting up a binary opposition *between* power and resistance does not do justice to his ideas. Arguably, Foucault (1979; 1980), as Young (1990) points out, is forwarding there is no outside to power. Consequently, any opposition or resistance to power can only be "imbricated within it" (Young, 1990, p. 87). My work in speaking to how fans use Scott Gomez with reference to the practices of the mass media, wants to remain cognisant to the articulations between resistance/power,

or tactics/strategies. Accordingly, my project wants to interrupt Foucault's insistence throughout his career of noting the strategies of power, without concomitantly marking the tactics or resistances of the popular (as noted by van Ingen, 2000).

Hall through his idea of articulation has come a long way in arguing against ideology as a kind of distortion for suppressing social conflict in capitalist societies. Hall (1980, 1985, and 1986a/b) employs ideology in such a number of ways. However, Hall arguably wants to retain both a broad definition of ideology, as a system of representation and meaning that is necessary for an individual to make sense of their historical situation; and a more specific conception, that ideology relates to *particular* manifestations of bourgeois or dominant thought. In a way, Hall's concept of articulation does allow for both senses of ideology, as it suggests that although there are "no guarantees" which structures will line up with what practices under what conditions. Conceivably this circumnavigates the need to say that ideology is solely oppressive power, but allows one to say, for example, certain discourses and particular ideologies do buttress and perpetuate racism at certain times and in certain circumstances. Thus, our questions as cultural critics should ask: under what times and under what circumstances do the relations or articulations between practices and structures matter?.

Hall's neutralising of ideology does run the risk of losing its critiquing potential. For example, sometimes Hall seems to be suggesting, despite his protests to the contrary, that ideology equates to all systems of representations. Chen (1996) also calls for "other" affective effects in order to understand the power/resistance nexus, like pleasure and emotion. Given the various uses of ideology, it is also not always clear how one could separate discourse from ideology, especially with reference to dominant power effects (as Hall, 1986b, actually notes). Yet, even a neutral conception of ideology, via Althusser, echoes Foucault's concept of discourse. Conceivably, the debate between discourse and ideology is one of preferred language and theorists. For example, Foucault's insistence on tracing the strategies and tactics within a social/discursive formation is surely not that different from the idea of articulated complex structures that rely on the: "nature of the historical conjuncture and balance of forces of struggle at any time" (Grossberg and Slack, 1985)? Although my work uses a discursive approach to representation (detailed below), it remains indebted to Hall's idea of articulation, which is historically implicated

in the idea of ideology. Perhaps the dynamism offered by articulation, that is a non-guaranteed fixing of meaning, offers the space to think about change within socio-cultural formations.

Thus, Hall's conjunctural theory of articulation, though not without problems, is informed both by discourse and ideology. Accordingly, rather than narrowly reductionist, economist or essentialist, Edwards (2001) argues that Hall's articulation thesis combines both the structural and the discursive. Conceivably, this fractured articulated totality, avoids being a totality of difference and opens up how we think about both the subject and social formations. Hall's (1985) ideas, through recognising the complexity of subject construction also partially interrupt Birrell and McDonald's (1999) contention that sport stars are "always already" deterministically ingrained (after Althusser) in specific power relations that enable specific knowledges (outlined in Chapter 2). Accordingly, I consider Gomez's construction across the PSI as contradictory and complex. Moreover, Slack and Whitt (1992) argue that the (dis-)unity of structured relations allows for the consideration that individuals are both subordinate and dominant across various registers. Scott Gomez, as a person of Spanish descent, an American citizen and a male athlete hero, can conceivably be read through a number of registers, and through relations of empowerment and disempowerment.

A notable sport studies application of Hall's ideas around articulation and "Marxism without Guarantees", is Andrews' (1996a) consideration of Michael Jordan. Andrews (1996a) remarks that: "[a]s a cultural construct, Jordan's mediated racial identity is not stable, essential, or consistent; it is dynamic, complex , and contradictory" (p. 126). Comparably, I consider Scott Gomez's construction through the media and fan narratives (see Chapter 4 and 5), which articulate him to a number of discourses, as "not guaranteed", thus relatively unfixed and variable across different contexts.

This is not to say that articulation is without problems. For example, Jameson (1993) remarks articulation is both a conceptual core and theoretical problem in cultural studies. Jameson (1993) identifies that the question of representation, that is how to write and what language to use for such complexes, is one of the most pressing issues for articulation. For example, do researchers write gender or race first and/or will one be considered more determining and central than the others? Accordingly, Jameson (1993) ar-

gues that articulation entails a "poetic" between the structural and discursive (p. 32). If representation is an issue *for* articulation, it is also *about* representation. I now turn to representation.

3.3 - Representation, the Circuit of Culture and Articulation

My reading practice for this project for both fan and media texts of Scott Gomez is framed around Hall's (1997a/b/c) deliberations on representation. Representation is linked to culture through the making of meaning. If, as Hall (1997a) argues culture is a process or set of practices that relies on its participants "making sense" of the world in similar ways, then language and other representational processes are integral to understanding culture. By emphasising practice, Hall (1997a) is highlighting that the importance of participants in a culture who attach meaning to certain objects, peoples or events (p. 3). Accordingly, cultural processes take place within certain contexts of use and frameworks of interpretation. Meaning is given by our use and methods of representing things (through stories, myths, images, value-orientations and classification for example). Through language[12], operating as a privileged representational system, we "make sense" of things and meaning is produced and exchanged (Hall, 1997a, p. 1). Although, Hall (1997a) is quick to point out that meaning as a dialogue is never guaranteed and always operates as an unequal exchange (p. 4). Meanings in turn are shared through our common access to language or other representational processes. Yet, "shared meanings" that define a culture are rarely unitary. Instead as Hall argues, there is always a diversity of meanings about any topics within a culture. Not least, by the fact cultures are as much about feelings and emotions as about abstract concepts (Hall, 1997a, p. 2).

As the link to culture demonstrates, representation does not exist in isolation. For du Gay, Hall, Janes, Mackay and Negus (1997) representation is one of the central practices in a circuit of culture. This circuit of culture consists of representation, identity, production, consumption and regulation. For du Gay et al (1997) a full analysis of a cultural text or artefact must acknowledge all of these cultural processes. Given the constraints of a Master's thesis, my focus is to examine the work of representation, language and meaning with regards to the fan and media texts of Scott Gomez. Although, given the interconnections and articulations within du Gay et al's (1997) circuit of culture, my

work does also touch on the formations of social identities, issues of production and consumption, and mechanisms of regulation.

Prior to considering the specificities of the poetics and politics of representation, I consider the sports media and the role of fans. Arguably, both the sports media and fans retain integral roles in the production of cultural meanings for what I call the "popular sport imaginary".

3.31 - Cultural Studies and Representational Analysis: Towards an Understanding of the PSI

> Media sport does not just present the world as it is, already constructed – it re-presents the world in terms of its own inferential framework and thus creates events with their own features – media events. (Hargreaves, 1986, p. 141)

> Fans possess not simply borrowed remnants snatched from mass culture, but their own culture built from the semiotic raw materials the media provides. (Jenkins, 1992, p. 49)

As outlined in Chapter 1, the mass media is a central site in the production of meaning and representations. Our everyday lives are saturated by television, newspapers, radio, movies, recorded music, the Internet, and so on (Croteau and Hoynes, 2000; Eldridge, 1993; and Kellner, 1995). Accordingly social relations, together with how we think about the world and ourselves, are media mediated (Hall, 1981b). In noting how the media provides a powerful source of ideas about race in particular, Hall (1981b) further considers the media is "one place where these ideas are articulated, worked on, transformed and elaborated" (p. 20). Concomitantly, our experience of sport - how we know and understand sport - is also constituted through the media (see for example, Boyle and Haynes, 2000; Kinkema and Harris, 1998; Rowe, 1999; and Wenner, 1998). If as Rowe (1999) argues, far more people watch, talk and read about sport than engage in sport through physical exertion, examining the sports media entails an appreciation of how most people in Western culture come to know sport today. Kellner (1995) further points out that the media (and I would argue the sports media) in a contradictory manner not

only reproduces prevailing relations of power, but also provides resources for the construction of new identities and empowerment.

Various terms have been used to describe the sport and media connection, including the "sport-media nexus" (Boyle and Haynes, 2000), "media sport" (Hargreaves, 1986), the "media sports cultural complex" (Rowe, 1999), and "MediaSport" (Wenner, 1998). Both media and sport are often traced onto commercial and corporate landscapes and as such are integral parts of the entertainment and cultural industries (Boyle and Haynes, 2000). Yet, MediaSport, as Wenner (1998) argues, also exists through the relations between texts and audiences, together with institutions. My work focuses on the first two landscapes of MediaSport, that is, texts and audiences. Arguably however, all three landscapes rather than being hermetically sealed entities, interact and overlap with one another.

Thinking about MediaSport audiences conceivably demands engagement with fandom. Fans as I have suggested, actively participate in proliferating the hero and sport, through other popular cultural texts, like fanzines. However, as noted earlier, fan artefacts are neither directly reflective of dominant mediated ideology, nor diametrically oppositional. Thus sport fan artefacts and media texts demonstrate the constant struggle for/in popular culture. As such it would seem that representation is a salient area of enquiry needed to examine the "popular".

I want to consider what fans "do" with Scott Gomez and thus comment on the subcultural aspects of everyday life. By doing so, my textual analysis extends to consider Gomez's body not just as a site to examine certain macro-structures, but also as a place to notice more micro-operations of power. Thus, I am interested in not just how Gomez reflects or displaces certain structural and institutionalised discourses, but what people "do" with Gomez and how they identify with him. Following de Certeau's (1984) work and Jenkins' (1992) modifications arguably through consuming Gomez fans both reproduce prevailing ideologies and discourses *and* remake Gomez through their online cultural artefacts.

Arguably, by "doing" Scott Gomez, my work adopts a number of new strategies and tactics in order to examine various media and online fan texts. I say "new" with reference to the combination of analyses (that is a cultural studies cognisant with the poetics

and politics of representation, postcolonial theory and Chicana/o studies) in order to look at popular cultural representations of a particular athlete.[13] In addition, as outlined in Chapter 2, my work looks at the under-examined representations of a "Latino" athlete.

My research takes place within the confines of office chair and computer screen. Part of the reasoning behind making my conclusion a website, available (or restricted) to anyone with a modem and computer interface, is however to join in a material way the Internet communities that converse about Scott Gomez. By doing so I want to negotiate my analysis and critique, by actually "doing" something. That is, by making my observations available to other sports fans' computer screens and office chairs.

3.32 - Articulating Line Calls 1: Poetics and Politics of Representation

My research on Scott Gomez as an athlete hero, is indebted to Hall's (1997a/b) commentary on the politics and poetics of representation. Jordan and Weedon (2000), in utilising Hall's (1997b) ideas around representation with reference to a working-class community in Cardiff, state that both the poetics and politics of representation are of principal concerns in producing, reproducing and interrogating social meanings together with the formation of subjectivities and identities. Moreover, Clifford (1986) argues, "the poetic and the political" are indispensable tools for interpreting culture. Hall (1997b) does not explicitly discuss the poetics of representation. Yet, Hall's (1997a) introduction to his edited anthology on representation states:

> the semiotic approach is concerned with the how of representation, with how language produces meaning – what has been called its 'poetics'; whereas the discursive approach is more concerned with the effects and consequences of representation – its 'politics'. It examines not only how language and representation produce meaning, but how the knowledge which a particular discourse produces connects with power, regulates conduct, makes up or constructs identities and subjectivities, and defines the way certain things are represented, thought about, practised and studied. (p. 6)

Given Hall's (1997b) reluctance to argue that a discursive approach to representation negates a semiotic approach (see p. 62), it can be implied that Hall is forwarding the need to retain both a poetics (which he conflates to semiotics) and a politics (or discursivity) of representation.[14]

Both poetics and politics for Hall (1997a/b) fall within a broad socio-constructionist understanding of representation. This appreciation argues, following both the "linguistic", "discursive", and "cultural turns" in the human and social sciences, that meaning is produced or constructed not simply found (Hall, 1997a/b). Accordingly, representation does not simply reflect, but constitutes the world. Continuing with Hall's ideas around articulation, Storey (1996), as previously highlighted, points out that the social production of meaning of:

> [a] text or practice or event is not the issuing source of meaning, but a site where the articulation of meaning – variable meaning(s) – can take place. And because different meanings can be ascribed to the same text or practice or event, meaning is always a potential site of conflict. (p. 4)

Hall (1996a) points out that media representations play a part in the formation of the things they present. What is "out there" is in the world is part constituted by how it is represented. Hence Hall (1996a) argues that the "reality of race" [the same could be said of other identity constructs] is "media-mediated" (p. 340). Representation is thus a practice, a kind of "work" that uses material objects and has material effects. Simplifications and stereotypes, as well as distortions of experience and "above all, *absences*" (Hall, 1996a, ibid, original emphasis) demand that researchers attempt to understand, not just what is visible, but what is forgotten about and silenced.

Hall's (1996a, 1997a/b) understanding of representation rejects both traditional reflective/mimetic and intentional approaches. The latter argues that the author imposes her/his meaning on the world through language. The former forwards that things exist in the material world and have clear meaning outside of the way they are represented.

3.321 - Poetics, Sports Chatter and the Popular Sport Imaginary

Hall (1997a) argues for the need to continue a dialogue between poetics and representation. This conversation enables for Hall (1997a/b) an engagement with the "how" of representation. For Hall (1997a/b) this translates to retaining a semiotic approach that is attentive to the production of meaning in language. Hall's conflation of poetics to semiotics is not, however, how I take up poetics, as I detail below. Hall's commitment to conjuncturalist cultural studies, thus some engagement with structuralism is demonstrated

through his endorsement of both semiotics/poetics and politics. Arguably, the temporary fixing of meaning through Hall's concept of articulation, implies some structuring in language.

Placed within the body of his work, it is perhaps clearer why Hall (1997a/b) seeks to retain both semiotics and discourse theory in order to understand the working/s of language and representation. Yet, although Hall (1997a/b) is keen to address the production of meaning in language, specifically through semiotics, he never clearly elaborates how to deploy this agenda or how this would articulate with his discursive and political understanding of representation. Rather than examining semiotics per se, hence taking up poetics following Hall (1997a/b/c), I address poetics through other theorists.

Aristotle (1987) considers poetics quite broadly as the art of representation. Culler (1997) more specifically considers poetics as the effort to describe the textual effects of meaning, rather than hermeneutically trying to discover meaning. Thus, Hall's semiotic understanding of meaning production in language, through his emphasis on poetics, arguably is re-addressed through the concern with the narrative effects of meaning, rather than the unearthing of meanings. Culler (1997) argues that researchers employing a poetical analysis engage with the conventions that make possible narrative structure, that is:

> what are the codes or systems of convention that enable readers to identify with literary genres, recognize plots, create characters out of the scattered details provided in the text, identify themes in literary works, and pursue the kind of symbolic interpretation that allows us to gauge the significance of poems and stories? (p. 58)

Consequently, poetics for Culler (1997) does not require that we know the meaning of a literary work, rather it engages with: "whatever effects can we attest to – for example, that one ending is more successful than another, that this combination of images in a poem makes more sense while another does not" (p. 59).

Closely related to poetics is rhetoric, which refers to the study of persuasion in speech and language. Aristotle (1987) however divorced poetic from rhetoric, regarding poetics as the art of representation (mimesis) and rhetoric as the art of persuasion. Yet, Culler (1997) suggests that poetics could be fruitfully regarded as an "account of the resources and strategies of literature" not quite reducible to rhetorical figures and tropes

(like metaphor, metonymy, alliteration, assonance and so on), but "part of an expanded rhetoric" that pays attention to the resources implemented for linguistic acts of all kinds (p. 67). Narrative effects however are not just dry strategies. Poetics for Aristotle (1987) is also a site where people receive pleasure from engaging with its representational artefacts (see pp. 34-35). After all people "enjoy looking at images, because what happens is that, as they contemplate them, they apply their understanding and reasoning to each element (identifying this as an image of such-and-such a man, for instance)" (Aristotle, 1987, p. 34). Genette (1979) further notes that poetics deals with "the human imagination applied to language" (p. 359). Conceivably, after Aristotle and Genette, poetics in dealing with structures and figurative forms of text, also elicits human pleasure and imagination.

I aim to translate Culler's and Aristotle's consideration of poetics into my project, as a way to read the fan and media narratives on Scott Gomez. For example, two ways a poetical analysis is salient for this project: firstly through Aristotle's commentary around the pleasure of representation, and secondly, around the idea that our knowledge of sport is framed by the poetic practices used by the mass media. With reference to the former, Aristotle indicates, audiences or fans receive pleasure from engaging with the poetics of representations. This pleasure feasibly structures the PSI, as much as other power relations. As indicated before, Eco (1986) argues that the poetic devices deployed by the media, also enable our everyday "sport chatter" or gossip. In reading sport journalism, I would argue beyond Eco's semiotic considerations and suggest that there are a number of over-used metaphors, allegories, tropes and characters. For example, repeatedly the narrative form of sport journalism constructs: winners and losers, villains and heroes, or more typically in the so-called zero-sum game of competitive sport there "are" winners or losers, villains or heroes in our chatter about athletes. Wenner (1995) concurs that such narratives are formulaic, as he laments that there are "always some good guys and bad guys" and "journalistic convention, the need to manufacture interesting and simple stories, demands this" (p. 228).

Arguably, the media as part of post-industrial culture is structured around the mass production model that follows formulaic genres and rules aiming to reach mass audiences (Miller, 1998). Yet, the way the media appropriate and even promote such narra-

tive convention, for example, by the over-use of binary oppositions, is hardly evenly distributed among different social groups. As previously indicated, Wenner (1995) argues that black athletes seem particularly susceptible to over-determination and stereotypical representations by the predominantly white journalists of the American sports media. Such stereotyping leaks out from any mere quest for narrative convention. As Hall (1997c) points out, representation becomes more complicated when figuring in difference. In frustration, Wenner (1995) suggests we ought to find the "real athlete" or "real human being" within such mediated narratives. Yet I would retort: how would we know any human being, *qua* human being, outside the work of representation? Moreover, how do such conventions (for example, binary oppositions, stereotypes and simple stories) play out not only within the various media representations, but also, in utilising Eco's observations, how do influence fan gossip of Scott Gomez?

As argued above, it is difficult to consider fan sport gossip about athletes outside of media narrative form. Accordingly, I consider both the media narratives and fan texts intertextually/inter-textually within my discussion in Chapter 5. Bennett and Woollacott (1987) argue that intertextuality in relation to Kristeva's work "refers to the system of references to other texts which can be discerned within the internal composition of a specific individual text" (pp. 44-45); whereas, inter-textuality refers to the "social organisation of the relations between texts within specific conditions of reading" (p. 45). My project is orientated toward both these approaches. In addition, as I have argued before, I consider both the media and fans, as integral to understanding the contours of the PSI. For clarity however, I separate my analysis of the media narratives (Chapter 4) and fan texts (Chapter 5).

If is hard and even arbitrary to seal off a poetical analysis of representation completely from an appreciation of its politics. For example, Culler (1997) points out that poetry in language, through employing figures of speech and certain language, aims to be "powerfully persuasive" (p. 66). Hall (1997b) further argues that the main problems of semiotics include its tendency to both neglect issues of power/knowledge and historical specificity, through dealing singularly with words functioning as signs within a closed system of language. Arguably, although for different reasons, poetics too neglects con-

texts of reception, together with questions of power. I now turn to consider the politics of representation.

3.322 – Politics, Discourse and Discursive Practices

Hall's (1997b) discursive approach to the politics of representation is indebted to work of Foucault. In order to address Hall's discursive understanding of representation I will briefly focus, following Hall (1997b), on Foucault's perspectives of discourse, power and knowledge, and the question of the subject.

The "social" for Foucault is produced within the networks of discourses and discursive practices. Understanding discourse as a system of representation through Foucault means engaging with: "A group of statements which provide a language for talking about – a way of representing the knowledge about – a particular topic at a particular moment in history" (Hall, 1997, p. 44). For example, intelligence is frequently defined today by examinations and tests and as such is a discourse or a specific expression of knowledge as power. This power/knowledge articulation in turn constitutes a particular conception of what it is to be an "intelligent" student. Discourses have rules, practices, and procedures that regulate how we talk about topics and objects. Discourses tend to have authorised speakers who uphold such rules and as such:

> [t]here is a raefication [*sic*], this time, of the speaking subjects; none shall enter the order of discourse if he [*sic*] does not satisfy certain requirements or if he is not, from the outset, qualified to do so. To be more precise: not all regions of a discourse are equally open and penetrable; some of them are largely forbidden (they are differentiated and differentiating), while others seem to be almost open to all winds and put at the disposal of every speaking subject, without prior restrictions. (Foucault, 1989, p. 221)

Moreover, Foucault considered that subjects are produced within and by discourse, thus: "[t]he subject can become the bearer of the kind of knowledge which discourses produces … [and] … it is the object through which power is relayed" (Hall, 1997b, p. 55). As such, the subject cannot levitate outside of the power relations of discourses as its origin and author. Accordingly, the subject for Foucault is not the origin or "Author" of explanation, but the target to be explained.

Rather than discourse just being one text, action, or source, Foucault argues that the status of thinking/knowledge production at any one time (or the *episteme*) could appear across a number of texts and forms of conduct, within any number of a society's institutional sites (Hall, 1997b, p. 44). For example, Foucault (1970) highlights the discourses of Enlightenment, such as rationality and order, define the sciences, which in turn lead to, for instance, a particular epistemological conception of the subject. A current example conceivably is the service model in business that considers customers as paying clients. This discourse has pervaded quite noticeably into North American and English universities. So much so, university students are now spoken about, not just *like* clients but, *as* clients, who pay their way and are "entitled" to economic satisfaction.

When certain discursive events line up with one another, that is, they "refer to same object, share the same style and ... support a strategy ... a common institutional, administrative or political pattern" (Cousins and Hussain, 1984, cited in Hall, 1997b, p. 44), Foucault argues they are part of the same "discursive formation" (Hall, 1997b, ibid). This lining up of discursive events, a sign of certain acceptance and stability to a regime of truth, has resonance with Hall's concept of articulation. As previously indicated, Hall's articulation argues that although there is "no guarantee", certain structures can line up with certain practices and discourses under particular conditions. Hall's (1985, 1986a/b) earlier considerations, however, generally refer to articulation with reference to a "social formation"; whereas, Foucault speaks to "discursive formation". Given Hall's previous commitments, arguably he is highlighting not that social formations are discursive formations rather, that representation can be meaningfully understood through discourse and discursive formation. A discursive understanding of representation for Hall (1997b) is interested in the production of meaning and intelligibility within discourses and discursive formations.

A discursive understanding of representation also addresses the relations of power. As noted previously regarding Hall's concept of articulation, Foucault (1980), rather than understanding power as an institution or a repressive force possessed by somebody, considers power as: "the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operated and which they constitute their own organization" (p. 92). What we know of the world for Foucault does not exist outside of these relations of

power. Knowledge attached to power has the power to "make itself true" and this knowledge has real effects through regulating the conduct of others through regulatory disciplining practices (Hall, 1997b, p. 49). For example, conceivably the discourse of "economic efficiency" issued by the Conservative Party in England during the Miners' strike in the 1980s, effectively convinced many people in England that the mines ought to be closed down. Many of the mines subsequently did close down. Truth and knowledge for Foucault are thus considered as effects of power. Dominant discourses are most likely those that have secure institutional location and enjoy public circulation (Weedon, 1987). Whereas, the resistances or what Weedon (1987) terms "reverse discourses", do not enjoy either the same circulation or institutional location. Weedon's points here have resonance with de Certeau's (1984) division of strategies and tactics of power, as outlined previously.

In framing my analysis to the poetical, I want to be attentive to certain structures and pleasure of text. For example, just because the hero is an over-used narrative device used by the media to gain audiences, does not mean that audiences do not receive pleasure from identifying with such a figure. By political I mean that which remains cognisant with power relations. Whereas a poetics looks to creative forms of a text, a politics looks to question the representation. For example, who is included and who is not? What values are prioritised? What is marked and what is unmarked? My means to approach this kind of analysis deploys the metaphor of interruption. Inspired by Hall's (1985) consideration of the "modes of interruption" (p. 106), interruption for my specific project means being cognisant of the poetical and political *work* of representation. By cognisant, similarly to Hall (1985), I mean jamming the "rules and systems of classifications" (p. 106) that make up the particular and seamless knowledge production of the Gomez texts. More specifically, my analysis seeks to be attentive to the articulatory "work" of representation.

Through applying some of his ideas around representation to issues of race and ethnicity, Hall (1997c) remarks that "difference" is an overdetermined theme within images and narratives of popular culture and the mass media (p. 225). Hall's comments about the fascination with difference within representation have resonance with the fan and media texts of Scott Gomez. As I have suggested before within some media sources

Gomez is hailed more frequently as "Hispanic" than as an "American-Alaskan". Figuring in difference to the Gomez texts also emphasises the problem of representation, in that groups are very much spoken for and on behalf of, even when they speak for themselves or not (Dyer, 1993). I turn now to consider systems of representation, and more specifically the role of language, which arguably are key sites both in creating culture and in perpetuating racism and colonialism today.

3.4 - Articulating Line Calls 2: Borderlands, Representing Difference and Postcolonial Theory

The strategy/tactic for writing this section actually came about from reading and reacting to media stories of Scott Gomez. Within certain media sources, Gomez is continually positioned as a recent migrant worker who is not an American citizen. Such interpellation of Gomez, resonated for me with Anzaldúa's *borderlands*. This resonance was not just from the obvious connection of the *borderlands* to the specificities of US/Mexico border, but more with the idea that Gomez articulates with a number of cultures and subjectivities. Gomez's ethnicity as a Mexican/Columbian/(American) is one over-determining focus across many of the texts examined. In order to ground my appreciation of "difference/s", I turn to consider the post-colonial writings of Edward Said, Gloria Anzaldúa and Frantz Fanon. I focus on their mediations on language, culture and colonialism. Indeed arguably what Said, Anzaldúa and Fanon have in common is precisely their recognition that language and systems of representation in general, and the mass media and popular culture more specifically, are important sites in sustaining and reproducing both colonialism and racism today. I take up their musings with specific reference to reading Scott Gomez in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.

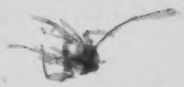
The post (in *post*-colonial) is quite misleading, as it seemingly refers to a period after the end of colonialism (Childs and Williams, 1997). Rather than referring to times totally past, arguably post-colonial signifies times present and the maintenance of colonialism and imperialism through ideological, discursive and economic mechanisms, despite a number of countries gaining political independence from their colonizer countries (noted by Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 1995; Childs and Williams, 1997; Hall, 1996b and Said, 1993, for example). This is not to say the post-colonial is somehow ahistorical.

Arguably, understanding the present does not exist outside of evaluating continuity and change, thus reflecting on the colonial past. Post-colonial theory generally, as Catherine Hall (1996) notes, has a pre-occupation with the idea of nation. Rather than arguing for a homogenous nation with one language and one people, Hall (1996) endorses the idea of a post-colonial inspired post-nation. Post-nations, for Hall (1996), insist upon and imagine nations or communities that are "not ethnically pure", but "inclusive and culturally diverse" (p. 69). Using Britain as an example, Hall (1996) forwards that a re-working of the histories of Empire and Britain, which focuses on "inter-dependence and mutuality" together with patterns of "domination and subordination" which are inscribed on the "relations between coloniser and colonised" (ibid.) would be required to posit a post-nation.

Such sentiments are affirmed by Said (1993) who argues: "[p]artly because of empire, all cultures are involved in one another; none is single and pure, all are hybrid, heterogeneous, extraordinarily differentiated, and unmonolithic [*sic*]" (p. xxv), including the United States. Said's (1993) and Hall's (1996) post-colonial sentiments have been implicitly addressed by a number of Latino/a authors who articulate borders and the *borderlands*. For example, Rosaldo (1989) argues that rather than cultures being hermetically sealed through borders, the: "Third world is imploding into the First" (p. 217). Thus borders and cultures in general need to be re-considered as places of continual cultural mixing. Rosaldo (1989) continues that: "the idea of an authentic culture as an internally cohesive and autonomous space is untenable except, perhaps, as a useful fiction or a revealing distortion" (p. 217).

Fanon (1967) argues that speaking: "means above all to assume a culture" (p. 17). Similarly, Anzaldúa (1999) asserts: "[e]thnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity – I am my language" (p. 81). Fanon remarks how language and culture are both integral in appreciating the processes of domination and resistance within colonised countries. Linking cultural studies discourse to the postcolonial, Chow (1998) argues the latter fundamentally questions the formers insistence on culture; specifically who's culture are we talking about? Fanon (1967) also recognizes that "dis-alienation" experienced by the colonised person, although profoundly psycho-socially imprinted within the individual, is: "primarily, economic" (p. 11). Anzaldúa's (1999) *borderlands* also find their significance through an understanding of language. The *borderlands* are utilized by Anzaldúa

in a number of ways throughout her book, including the borders of the physical, the psychological, the sexual and the spiritual. Rather than a place where identities and subjectivities neatly intersect, *borderlands* are changing places where identities (race, sexuality, class and so on) and cultures articulate. Articulation here is used in terms of Hall's consideration on the concept. A poetical analysis of representation, according to Culler (1997), argues that critics can accept the plural meanings and effects of language, but no attempt is made to reconcile such elements. Similarly the *borderlands* are spaces inbetween totalities for Anzaldúa.[15] For example, the US/Mexico border, as a geo-political and physical space is neither American *nor* Mexican. A political analysis further considers the power operations, material effects and socio-historical context of such language construction.



3.41 - Orientalism: The Politics and Poetics of Representing "the Other"

> Why is "difference" so compelling a theme, so contested an area of representation? What is the secret fascination of "otherness" and why is popular representation so frequently drawn to it? (Hall, 1997c, p. 225)

> Racism, of course, operates by constructing impassable symbolic boundaries between racially constituted categories, and its typically binary system of representation constantly marks and attempts to fix and naturalize the difference between belongingness and otherness. (Hall, 1992b, p. 255)

In speaking to recent media representations of black athletes, including Ben Johnson, Linford Christie and Florence Griffith-Joyner, together with nineteenth and twentieth century depictions of Africa, including advertisements, films and educational documents, Hall (1997c) asserts that such diverse narratives and images have certain things in common. This commonality, as highlighted by the quotations above, is the shared fascination with difference, which in turn involves the representational practices of stereotyping.[16] Through discussing the reductive and exclusionary processes of stereotyping Hall (1997c) notes the connection between representation and the marking of difference inevitably evoke relations of power.

Hall (1997c), for instance, points out how the media stereotype the previously mentioned black athletes through sexual imagery. For example, Linford Christie, the

former British 100 metre champion, was frequently considered within the British media through the size of his "lunchbox" (genitals), rather than his success on the track. The media, like other representational apparatus, also employ stereotypes through using binary oppositions. As such, Hall (1996a) remarks that although one aspect of racism seems to occupy a rather simplified space of manichean opposites: black/white, civlized/primi- tive, dark/light, good/evil and so on; really there is "nothing simple about the structure and the dynamics of racism" (p. 341). Moreover, Hall (1996a) quite eloquently points out that racism's: "capacity to punctuate the universe into two great opposites masks something else; it masks the complexes of feelings and attitudes, beliefs and conceptions, that are always refusing to be so neatly stabilized and fixed" (p. 341). Relevant to Scott Gomez, Hoose (1989) also points out how "Latino" baseball players have also been stereotyped through media representations, either as "cheerful, peppery character[s] from south of the border" (p. 92) or "hot", "hot blooded" (quick to temper), "moody", "crazy", and "flaky" (pp. 92-93). Bretón (2000) comparably refers to how American sportswriters employ the descriptors of "showboating", "moody" and "hot-tempered" (p. 17) to describe Latino baseball players. For example, one of the initial articles I read about Gomez was by Morgan (2000) on *SI* online and had the title: "El fuego: Devils' Gomez is one hot rookie" (p. 1).[17]

Dyer (1993) similarly argues, that the representational processes of both social typing and stereotyping evoke a sense of ethnocentric belongingness, separating "us" from "them", which requires an analysis of power relations. In order to consider how certain groups are able to represent someone or something in certain ways, within a kind of "regime of representation", Hall (1997c) discusses Said's *Orientalist* thesis, which I now consider.

Far beyond the specific instances of racial stereotyping in sport journalism, Said's (1995) *Orientalism* argues there is a whole network of discursive representations manufactured by the West to understand and classify "the other". More specifically for Said "the other" is "the Orient". The ability to categorize, in turn enables containment, order and consent, thus Imperial rule. Further, Said (1995) asserts that only through adopting Foucault's notion of discourse can this process be understood: "...the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage – and even produce –

the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period" (p. 3).

In describing such ethnocentric Western representations (from government documents and academic writing to novels), "the Orient" is viewed as chaotic, irrational, child-like, feminine, degenerate and evil. In contrast, the West is viewed as ordered, civilized, masculine and good. This manichean logic thus serves to "show that European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self" (Said, 1995, p. 3). While Said (1993) does not address the media at great length in *Orientalism*, in *Culture and Imperialism* he argues that the American media coverage of the Gulf War (1990-1991) was a completely government controlled affair that overused *Orientalist* imagery of "the enemy". This ensured, as Said (1993) points out, that the American media representations gave very little attention to the damage inflicted on the Iraqi people and their land. Denzin (1996) further notes how the media effectively "control a society's discourses about itself" (p. 319). Most Americans, according to Denzin (1996), know and "understand the American racial order through media representations of the Black ethnic other" (p. 319). As such, Denzin (1996) argues that the media operate as an "Orientalizing" agency, translating Michael Jordan's Blackness into "a nonthreatening Reaganesque masculinity for male youth in the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Poland, and Britain" (p. 320).

Although Hall (1997c) fruitfully stresses that Said's *Orientalist* thesis remains cognisant that the circularity of power is always "especially important in the context of representation" (p. 261); Hall's brief examination does not address any limitations to Said's ideas. Chow (1998) however argues that by describing otherness through such a "racial dyad", Said's *Orientialist* thesis is limited through his foreclosure on any "possibility of the non-white non-West ever having its own culture" (p. 2).[18] Keeping in mind Said's commentary on colonialism and representation, I now turn to the work of Fanon and Anzaldúa, as I think both writers try and work through the possibility of "others" making culture.[19]

3.42 - From Colonial Language to the Languages of the Borderlands

> The U.S.-Mexican border *es una herida abierta* where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds. And before a scab forms hemorrhages [*sic*] again, the lifeblood of two worlds merging to form a third country – a border culture. Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish *us* from *them*. A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. (Anzaldúa ,1999, p. 25)

> The world is marked by language, not engulfed by it ... the world stubbornly resists closure .... In language we inhabit, construct and extend realities. (Chambers, 1994, p. 133)

Anzaldúa's (1999) opening chapter, *The Homeland, Aztlan*, starts with a powerful poem that describes the US-Mexican geopolitical border as:

> 1,950 mile-long open wound
> dividing a *pueblo*, a culture,
> running down the length of my body,
> staking fence rods in my flesh,
> splits me splits me
> *me raja me raja*
> This is my home
> this thin edge of
> barbwire. (pp. 24-25)[20]

"Latin America" however, as both Anzaldúa's (1999) and Gómez-Pena (1993) argue, does not actually end at the US border, but operates wherever there are "Hispanic – white" relations. This border is an open wound, where Anzaldúa (1999) argues: "the Third World grates against the first and bleeds" (p. 25). Indeed, all those who cross the definition of "normal" are forced to inhabit the *borderlands*. For Anzaldúa (1999) these exiles often include all manner of national "aliens", with or without documentation, whether they are "Chicanos", "Indians" or "Blacks" (p. 25). The "legitimate" inhabitants ("the border patrol") police the *borderland*. Invariably, Anzaldúa argues, this surveillance patrol consists of the Anglo-whites in power. Hence, for oppressed peoples such spaces are claustrophobic and uncomfortable.

Yet, in this dangerous, unsafe inbetween place (*"los intersticios"*), something else happens. This something is hope. The convergence of different peoples, sexualities, eth-

nic identities and so on, create "a shock culture, a border culture, a third country" (Anzaldúa, 1999, p. 33) that is continually remade. The *borderlands,* where both barbed wire and hope co-exist for Anzaldúa, are thus sites of ambivalence. These inbetween places have resonance with Bhabha's (1986) rethinking of the Fanonian coloniser-colonised relationship. Bhabha (1986) argues that there is a nondialectical moment of manicheanism, where "in occupying two places at once - or three in Fanon's case - the depersonalized, dislocated colonial subject can become an incalculable object, quite difficult to place" (pp. xxi-xxii). Thus similar to Anzaldúa, Bhabha's reformulation argues, that subaltern subjectivities and bodies offer resistance to colonial culture because in defying classification total control remains elusive.

Rather than overt measures of control, the labelling of ethnic identities by white, Anglo authorities as a classification and containing strategy has a long history within US-Mexican relations. Anzaldúa (1999) reminds us that rather than being a recent or helpful classification, the label "Mexican-American", was formed by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848). This label, as noted by Sonia Saldivar-Hull (1999), effectively creates a new American minority (p. 2). Further, Anzaldúa (1999) views "Mexican-American" and other Anglo terms like "Latin American" or "Hispanic" as "cop-outs", in that such classifications simply make it easier to handle *certain* people on paper. Anzaldúa is arguing then that the acculturation of all types of people into US society occurs ideologically, especially at the level of language.

One way Anzaldúa argues that *borderland* others can resist colonialism within an American context today, is to speak many hybrid languages. Anzaldúa's disorientating non-linear text, thus switches between several languages (from English, Castillian Spanish, Chicano Spanish, Nahuatl for example). Indeed poetry intermingles with prose and academic narrative, thus arguably Anzaldúa is using language to disturb the academic text. By adopting a forked tongue (a *patois*) individuals can reject "the official" colonizer's language (typically taught in and used within institutions), and instead embrace a living language (like Chicano Spanish, for instance). Such poly-vocal languages are the languages of the *borderlands*. Anzaldúa argues that forked "illegitimate" tongues are attacked by dominant Anglo culture due to fact they resist taming, thus containment. For example, the US government maintains their power over "Mexican-Americans" by

hardly offering Spanish (in any form) within schools, despite the projection that people of Spanish descent by the mid-twenty first century will be the biggest minority in the US.

Fanon (1967) also speaks to the centrality of language in constructing racist-colonialist spaces:

> I ascribe a basic importance to the phenomenon of language. That is why I find it necessary to begin with this subject, which should provide us with one of the elements in the colored man's [*sic*] comprehension of the dimension of the other. For it is implicit that to speak is to exist absolutely for *the other*. (p. 17, original emphasis)

Rather than accepting the modern myth of biology describing existence, existence for Fanon is a socio-cultural relation, and, as the above quotation indicates, it is a matter of speaking (or language) which implicates an other (Cheyfitz, 1991). Fanon (1967) argues that speaking is not just a matter of being in a position to use a: "certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture" (p. 124). Rather than just being concerned with the poetics of language here, Fanon is attentive to the politics of language within the colonial context. Indeed Fanon (1967) emphatically articulates colonialism to racism: "[f]or the moment I want to show why the Negro of the Antilles, whoever he is, has always to face the problem of language. Furthermore, I will broaden the field of this description and through the Negro of the Antilles include every colonized man" (p. 18).

The "Negro of the Antilles" for Fanon (1967) actually comes closer to being a "real human being" via the "mastery of the French language" (p. 18). By doing so colonised subjects put on the white world and "epidermalize" colonial culture (Fanon, 1967). Hence, the colonised man is measured by "his" ability to assimilate into the colonizer's culture.[21] As Cheyfitz (1991) argues, just as existence is a matter of language for Fanon, race, a kind of political effect of existence, is also a concern of language and becoming white is a political matter, a problem of power. Being able to master the master's language does not end feelings of alienation but fortifies alienation, isolating the colonised subject from himself/herself as well as from their communities. Moreover, as Fanon elaborates, the coloniser never actually recognises the colonised subject's mastery of language, by replying to the subject with racist quips, surprise, and condescension. Hence,

the assimilation is prevented from being total, as the colonised man never escapes "his" black body, and mastering the coloniser's language merely affords "him" with "honorary citizenship" (Fanon, 1967, p. 38).

In the revolutionary context, in contrast to the colonial one, colonised speakers use the master's language against the master. In that:

> The native speaker ... does not so much master the master's language as take possession of it, or, more precisely, take up his rightful place in it .... the revolutionary native speaker demonstrates that the master's language has its origin not in the master but in the political needs of any people who must speak it. (Cheyfitz, 1991, pp. 126-127)

Thus similar to Anzaldúa (1999), Fanon argues a redeployment of language is key in the struggle for culture and nation more generally. Yet Anzaldúa (1999), unlike Fanon, addresses that both language and culture are not just controlled by the colonisers, but are also gendered.

This gendering remains for Anzaldúa within the coloniser's culture (American/Spanish) and within multiple colonised cultures (Anzaldúa specifically uses the example of Chicano Culture/s). Anzaldúa (1999) argues that culture in default mode: "is made by those in power – men. Males make the rules and laws; women transmit them" (p. 38); and, through language: "our female being is robbed by the masculine plural. Language is a male discourse" (p. 76). Traditional male culture (patriarchy) for Anzaldúa, maintains women in rigidly prescribed roles (housewife, mother, care-giver and so on). Patriarchy in turn also ensures women remain compliant to men. With regards to language, women, for example, are traditionally told to be quiet, thus their voice is silent. Due to women's lowly status and internalised low self-esteem, Anzaldúa (1999) suggests women are especially at risk on the *borderlands*. Through standpoint comments like these, Anzaldúa (1999) is suggesting those who occupy the most marginalized positions within any society potentially can offer a more accurate view of the power structures and hierarchies operating within the given social structure (Jamieson, 1998).

While Anzaldúa (1999) argues for resistance through language, the ultimate response to colonialism and all other forms of oppression for Anzaldúa is the feminist cultural formation she calls *the New Mestiza*. Beyond a closed and totalised prescription,

Anzaldúa (1999) articulates that the new mestiza consciousness straddles two or more cultures, and thus is the struggle of borders (*Una lucha de fronteras*):

> Because I, a mestiza,
> continually walk out of one culture
> and into another,
> because I am in all cultures at the same time,
> *alma entre dos mundos, tres, cuatro,*
> *me sumba la cabeza con lo contradictorio.*
> *Estoy noteada por todas las voces que me hablan*
> *Simultáneament.* (p. 99)

This new *borderlands* attempts to circumnavigate all dualisms (especially the violent hierarchy that exists between white/colour, male/female). Thus, Anzaldúa regards this project as not just helping women, but assisting men too, in forming new masculinities. This proposal rather than being one where cultures neatly intersect are sites of cultural collision. This collision, that embraces a tolerance for ambiguity, that rejects dualist thinking, that lies and shifts between cultures, is akin to a site of white noise. Embodying the not quite there, white noise is the inbetween intervals, or the gaps or delays occurring between stations on the radio.[22]

3.5 - Conclusion: "Knowing" Scott Gomez

My story about Scott Gomez, athlete hero wades through a number of theoretical orientations, from cultural studies to postcolonial studies. Following Harari (1979), I plan to "leave these strategies [and tactics] in their uniqueness and not try to erase their borders and the differences between them" (p. 12). My orientating points of contact are however: representation, articulation, discourse, meaning, language and culture. As I have stressed throughout this chapter struggle my overarching interest is the struggle for/in popular culture. Yet, one way, post-colonial studies interrupts cultural studies, is underscoring the ethnocentrism of "culture" (Chow, 1998). Chow (1998) like Said (1995) underscore that culture, informed through Foucault, is not just a "way of life", but a way of life that depends upon particular "processes, categories and knowledges through which communities are defined" (Donald and Rattansi, 1992, p. 4)

Gomez as an athlete hero is arguably a site for the struggle of popular culture and accordingly I consider him as a "popular culture event" via Hall's (1981a) concept of a cultural symbol. The meanings of cultural symbols are partially provided by the articulated combination of practices, discourses and ideologies within social fields or formations. Rather there are relations between articulated discourses, practices and institutions that leak out into relations of dominance and subordination within the field/s of popular culture. I seek to foster an analysis that is sensitive to how articulated cultural relations are potentially ingrained by colonialist and sometimes racist attitudes that ever present in "white culture – other culture" relations within the American context.

Anzaldúa's *borderlands* are sites of ambivalence, where both hope and oppression occur. Whereas Anzaldúa's conceives the *borderlands* as places where people who are most at risk and marginalised are located, I want to consider the *borderlands* also as places where individuals straddle different cultures and conceivably are both in positions of empowerment and disempowerment. For example, conceivably Scott Gomez is both "in place" and "out of place" within the US, or perhaps between US cultures today. Although Hall's (1981) analysis focuses on the power plays of popular culture as relayed through class struggle, arguably sexuality, gender, race, nationhood, ethnicity, ability and so on, are also part of the labour for/in popular culture.

Accordingly, Hall's development of the concept of articulation has utility here, as Slack and Whitt (1992) argue that the (dis-)unity of structure relations permits the consideration that individuals are both subordinant and dominant in different registers (as noted above). This is not to deny that some people are very much at risk and are oppressed through a number of registers, but to insist that different subject positions, do in fact articulate differently to a number of discourses and social practices. For example, a middle class woman, a black man, a working class woman working in academia and so on, are conceivably both privileged through a number of registers and disempowered through a number of other registers. Moreover, how these registers articulate with different contexts is also of issue.

I also consider the Gomez texts through what I call the "popular sport imaginary". What I mean by this phrase is that although most people experience mediated sport today, fans also re-make sport through their engagement with it. For example in Gomez's case,

by the construction of websites and chat rooms devoted to talking about him. This is not to say fans do not use media artefacts, for example photographs and articles, and sometimes reflect the prevailing discourses disseminated by the media; but fans also meaningfully identify with each other, evidently gaining pleasures from gossiping about Gomez.

There are many different ways of knowing Scott Gomez. I limit my understanding, to a representational analysis of the Gomez texts. Accordingly, my work is part of the over-determined category of textual analysis of MediaSport (Wenner, 1998), although I also add fan reflection into the equation. Other methods of getting to know Gomez's fans include ethnographic or interview research.[23] Similarly, there are other ways to engage with cultural studies, for example semiotic, psychoanalytical, feminist or political economy approaches.

My project seeks to broaden how researchers examine and theorise athlete heroes or celebrities and is driven by the desire to utilise a number of different texts, from fan to media based, whilst being cognisant of the play between such texts. Do fan narratives for example echo either the *NYT* or *ADN's* reports of Scott Gomez? If yes, how are such narratives similar? If no, what else is going on between and within such texts? By asking such questions, I feel there is still much to be written about the interplays of language, meaning, text and representation in order to provide analyses of the cultural and social. This is why I am drawn to the work of Stuart Hall, as Morley and Chen (1996) argue, because there is preponderance with textuality in Hall's work.

3.51 - Research Questions Drawn from Chapter 2 and Chapter 3: Ways of Knowing Scott Gomez

1. How are the concepts hero/celebrity operating (implicitly or explicitly) with regards to Scott Gomez within the variety of texts under analysis? If heroes are cultural signposts and exemplars to others, in what ways is Gomez hailed a hero? By reading the Gomez texts, what can we say about heroism today?

2. What are the trends between all of the texts? What are the differences? Are fans merely reproducing media discourses or are fans doing something different via

their identifications? Do the identifications by fans compare to the concept of a virtual community? Are these sport fans comparable to Jenkins' (1992) textual poacher media fans? What can we say about fandom online?

3. How are the processes of representation and articulation operating with regards to these texts? If the *borderlands* or colonialism are considered always functioning in white -"Hispanic/Other", what can we say about the Gomez texts? What discourses, practices and structures is Gomez made to articulate with within the representations? What are the poetical and political effects of such representations? What is silenced by such texts?

4. What description can be given of the struggle for/in popular culture and more specifically the PSI, within, across and between these narratives?

3.52 - Delimiting the Gomez Texts

My initial research on Scott Gomez conducted a number of Internet searches. Firstly, for the work included within this project, I used the search engine Google.[24] My search tag included both name plus the limitation of + hero ("name + hero"). My results were: "Scott Gomez + hero" (December, 2000: 3, 520 refs in 0.32 sec); retrieved via MS Explorer 5.5.[25] Although this site elicited a number of websites I am limiting my analysis to two fan ran websites: Scott's "official" website and Kelly and Julie's "unofficial" Scott website.[26] Secondly, my media sources included online archive searches of the *ADN* and the *NYT*, together with *SI*.[27] I restricted the information included in this project to the timeline of June 1998 – July 2000. My rationale behind this timeline is the density of media material that parallel certain "high points" in Gomez's professional hockey career. These "high points" include: Gomez's entry into the NHL, his selection for the All-Star game, his team winning the Stanley Cup and his receiving the Rookie of the Year honours. All inquiries included the search tag: "Gomez + ice hockey", and all searches were completed in December 2000 via MS Explorer 5.5.[28] The *NYT* elicited 121 articles, the *ADN* 121 and *SI* 19 articles. I now turn to consider the media texts.

NOTES

[1] Ingham et al. (1993) argue that journalists or researchers reveal more about their own ideological identities in selecting certain heroes than any qualities embodied by the chosen individual (also noted in Chapter 2).

[2] I credit Ange Specht, a doctoral student within the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation with the idea of researcher as textual poacher. For further discussion of fans as textual poachers, see Chapter 2.

[3] By historically, I refer to the development of cultural studies in Britain from the 1950s to the 1980s.

[4] At least as Hall (1992a) remarks, cultural studies as: "working within shouting distance of Marxism, working on Marxism, working against Marxism, working with it, working to develop Marxism" (p. 279).

[5] Hall is not the only scholar within Marxism who has an interest in articulation, and he draws on a number of other theorists. Larrain (1996) points to a rich history of the articulation thesis through the works of: Altusser, Laclau, Mepham, Poulantzas, Godelier and Pêcheux (see pp. 48-51 especially). Also see Slack's (1996), together with Jameson's (1993) genealogies of articulation. I primarily use Hall because of his cultural studies sensibilities and his sustained commentary on articulation with reference to cultural processes and practices.

[6] This is not to say that there is no relationship between the conditions of social existence and our experience of these conditions, just that there is no direct correspondence. Hall (1985) further notes that Althusser (1969) does not really develop the "Imaginary" in the Lacanian sense within this particular work, rather imaginary is used to separate it from the real, i.e., in the usual senses of the words. Although Hall (1985) stresses that Althusser (1969), similar to Levi-Strauss, does have the unconscious nature of ideology in mind, through the fact we are not always aware of the: "rules and systems of classification of an ideology when we enunciate any ideological statement" (p. 106). Conceivably, discourse (in the Foucualtian sense) could be fruitfully substituted for where Hall (1985) uses ideology. The effects of such statements not only have a material relation for Hall (1985), but they remain open to analysis and "modes of interruption" (p. 106).

[7] I use the word suture in a similar way to articulation. Suture for psychoanalytic film theorist Kaja Silverman (1986) is the space between subject and discourse, or as she argues where: "subjects emerge within discourse" (p. 219). Yet, suture like articulation more generally can also be extended to consider how structures are produced and re-produced through their relationships to practices and discourses.

[8] Hall (1986a) argues that post-marxists, (like Hall, I use the m in *marxist* in lowercase), are marked by their use of marxist concepts, whilst continually undermining their adequacy. Hall (1986a) actually explicitly argues that although he considers practices as operating discursively and the self as always in flux and formed through discourse; he rejects Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) development of articulation where "[t]he critique or reductionism has apparently resulted in the notion of society as a totally open discursive field" (p. 56). For Hall (1986a) to only understand the social in that way is to use the discursive as a "reductionism upward" (p. 57), potentially leading to a neglect of "material practice and historical condition" (p. 58).

[9] Hall (1986b) is being interviewed within this article and does not give an exact reference for Benjamin.

[10] Foucault thus prioritises epistemological questions over questions of ontology.

[11] Foucault (1979) actually states: "where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power" (p. 95)

[12] Hall (1997a) argues that all representational and meaning-making practices can be considered as operating *like* a language. This does not mean that such practices are all written or spoken, but rather: "because they use some element to stand for or represent what we want to say, to express or communicate a thought, concept, idea or feeling" (Hall, 1997a, p. 4). Hall (1997a) provides the examples of spoken language using sounds, written language using words, musical language using notes on a scale, body language using physical gesture, and traffic lights indicating their function by the signals red, green and amber (pp. 4-5).

[13] This is not to say "sport studies" has not taken up the mantle of cultural studies. For example, the following is a brief list (with selective works) of researchers that offer a rich tradition of cultural studies within sport: Bryson (1990); Gruneau (1983; 1988); Hargreaves [Jennifer] (1982; 1986); Hargreaves [John] (1986; 1992); Ingham and Hardy (1984); Lawrence and Rowe (1986); McKay (1986); Tomlinson (1989; 1992); Whannel (1984; 1986; 1992; 1999); and Whitson (1984; 1986). More recently, Andrews (1993; 1996a/b), Carrington (1998), Cole (1993), Jackson (1998), McDonald (1996), McDonald and Birrell (1999); Miller, (1999), Miller and McHoul, (1999) have stretched the theoretical orientations of cultural studies and sport. For a more through history of cultural studies and sport in times past, see Andrews and

Loy (1993). For application, see Donnelly's (1992) edited *Sociology of Sport Journal* on "British Cultural Studies and Sport".

[14] Lidchi (1997) more explicitly within Hall's anthology takes up the poetics (again, considered through semiotics) and politics of representation, but does so in reference to ethnographic museums. Accordingly, I limit my consideration to Hall's commentary, which following Jordan and Weedon's (2000) assertions, does take up both the politics and poetics of representation.

[15] I do not hyphen "inbetween" (here or throughout the text) in order to emphasize the parataxis of both words, as opposed to the in and the between.

[16] Hall (1997c) though highlighting racial and ethnic difference as the "compelling theme" (p. 225) of representation, remarks the other dimensions of difference, "such as gender, sexuality, class and disability" (p. 225) are equally applicable.

[17] http://www.sportsillustrated.cnn.com/thenetwork/news/2000/02/21/cnnsicomprofile_gomez/

[18] Although in *Culture and Imperialism* Said (1993) does attempt to readdress this, together with acknowledging his neglect of resistance in *Orientalism*.

[19] Said's (1995) neglect of "others" making culture, echoes Foucault's neglect of resistance (as previously pointed out).

[20] I reproduce Anzaldúa's (1999) text in the manner it appears in the *Borderlands*. Anzaldúa is playing with the space between her words in order to disrupt the idea of linear narrative.

[21] Throughout *BSWM* Fanon (1967) uses the male pronoun with regards to subject, human being and citizen. Here I put such assertions in quotation marks in order to highlight that I am merely using but not subscribing to Fanonian language. In criticism of Fanon, Chow (1998) points out that the man of colour is given far more analytic attention within *BSWM* than the women of colour. Thus, whereas *he* suffers the psychic blows of colonialism and through *his* courage and endurance becomes a "cultural hero"; *she* is considered chiefly via her desire for sexual relations with the white man and is thus shameless and degenerate (Chow, 1998, pp. 63-72).

[22] My idea of white noise in cultures was inspired by Gamal Abdel-Shehid's question to the poet Marlene Noubese Philp. During question time after a poetry recital, Professor Abdel-Shehid asked Noubese Philp whether "other" cultures could be (re-)considered as noisy, rather than silent.

[23] Despite a number of attempts (over a 13 month period) to contact the authors of various Scott Gomez websites and other fans, I have not received any response to my emails.

[24] http://www.google.com

[25] As McDaniel and Sullivan's (1998) examination of *cybersport* points out, different search engines for the same sport topic elicit dramatically different number of documents. I focus to Google only because of the time and space constraints imposed upon me by a Master's thesis. I use the Google engine due to its quickness and efficient method for conducting searches. I also use Google because Canadian researchers developed it!

[26] See http://www.scottygomez.com and http://www.geocites.com/scott_gomez/

[27] For the *NYT* website see – http://www.nytimes.com; For the *ADN* website see - http://www.adn.com. For the *SI* website see – http://www.sportsillustrated.cnn.com. Both the *NYT* and *ADN* have archive search engines online, but there is a charge for each requested article. Thus microfiche was used to view and print articles. *SI* does not have an online archive search, thus magazines were manually read and photocopied for the given time period.

[28] Ice hockey had to be included in the search tag as there is also a professional baseball player called Scott Gomez.

PART TWO : I UNDO

CHAPTER 4 : ILLUMINATING SCOTT GOMEZ - MEDIA NARRATIVES OF AN ATHLETE HERO

The following seeks to outline a number of print-media articles on Scott Gomez. Arguably as Jamieson (1998) points out it is important to use a variety of texts to address the complexity of cultural representation on offer about athletes today. My analysis within this chapter draws from three resources: *The New York Times* (*NYT*), *Sports Illustrated* (*SI*) and *Anchorage Daily News* (*ADN*). In Chapter 5, I take up various online fan texts of Gomez. I utilise the *NYT* due to its status as a mainstream national (American) newspaper, *SI* because it is a widely read American sports magazine, and *ADN* because it is the main local newspaper of Gomez's hometown.

By reading inter(-)textually[1] across these sources, I want to gage the similarities and differences between their representation of Gomez, especially with regards to thinking through Gomez as hero. Heroes, as outlined in Chapter 2, are considered cultural signposts and exemplars to others. As such, what kind of exemplar to others is Gomez? Does Gomez's form and function change across the texts? As outlined in Chapter 3, I frame my textual analysis to interrupting the politics and poetics of representation. The poetical for my analysis refers to the structures and pleasure of language, whereas the political considers the articulatory "work" and power moves of representations that make up the particular and seamless knowledge productions of the Gomez texts.

4.1 - Gomez in the *NYT*: Hispanic Pioneer, but not quite Wayne Gretzky

The "Scott Gomez" search (between June 1998 – July 2000) within the online *NYT* archives, elicited 122 articles.[2] All articles were reviewed via microfiche for Gomez content and seven articles were chosen for their most sustained commentary.

Scott Gomez came to the attention of the American national media when the *NYT* proclaimed: "*Rangers and Devils Find Diversity in Draft*" (Lapointe, 1998). Within the subtext of this article Gomez (along with Emmanuel or "Manny" Malhotra)[3], is further described as an "exotic" choice and is proof, according to Lapointe (1998), that the NHL is finding diversity not only outside of its shores, with draft choices from Scandinavian nations and the old Soviet bloc, but within its shores too:

> [t]oday, when the best of the 18-year-olds were chosen in the annual entry draft, the Rangers and the Devils chose North Americans whose family backgrounds underscored the increasingly diverse nature of an increasingly global sport. (p. 2)

The New Jersey (NJ) Devils, with the 27th and final pick of the first round, took Scott Gomez, who is described by Lapointe (1998) as:

> born and raised in Anchorage, who said his father's family was once deported back to Mexico for illegally immigrating into California. His American-born father is now a construction worker in Anchorage, and his mother is a hairdresser from Colombia who once lived in Brooklyn. (p. 2)

Such comments mark Gomez's working class upbringing. Word like "exotic" and "diverse" also underscore that despite being born in Alaska and being a second-generation American citizen, Gomez remains on the borders of American citizenry. Gomez's marginality is further emphasised when Lapointe (1998) highlights: "[t]he Islanders *stayed domestic*, choosing a wing from Cleveland [Michael Rupp]" (p. 2, emphasis added). Is Gomez also not "domestic"?

In stressing the commodification of athletes today, Lapointe (1998) highlights that Scott Gomez was a much sought after player in the NHL draft. In order to get Gomez at No.27 in the first round, the Devils traded two second-round picks to the Dallas Stars. Towards the end of the article, the General Manager of NJ, Lou Lamoriello, describes Gomez as: '"excitable. All energy. In your face. He has natural instincts and hockey sense"' (Lapointe, 1998, p. 2). In addition, Gomez is seemingly confident of his ability, as according to Lamoriello, he '"plays the way he talks"' (Lapointe, 1998, p. 2). Gomez is quoted as saying that his father's family was '"really, really poor"' and he remains in awe of his father Carlos who wakes up prior to 7am in the Alaskan winter in order to lay iron pipes. Gomez suggests that he could not cope with doing that and instead Lapointe suggests he is destined to the bright lights of the NHL.

The *NYT* continue their Scott Gomez coverage with the article "*He's 19, Skilled and Maybe N.H.L Pioneer*" by Alex Yannis (1999a). Again, the article highlights Gomez's ethnicity: "[a]ccording to the league, Gomez is the first Hispanic player ever to be selected in the first round of the National Hockey League Draft" (Yannis, 1999a, p. 1).

Yannis (1999a) highlights that although Scott Gomez went to NJ training camp last year he did not make the team. However, this year he is described as coming of age, which is reflected in Gomez's comment: "'[j]uniors was fun last year .... Here, it is all business'" (Yannis, 1999a, p. 1). Robbie Ftorek (former head coach) describes Gomez as a "'natural center'" and rather than have to do anything special, merely has to "'be himself'" (Yannis, 1999a, p. 1). Yannis (1999a) argues:

> [p]art of being himself is being proud of his background. His father, Carlos, is Mexican and his mother Dalia, is Colombian. Carlos Gomez was one of 10 children born to migrant Mexican farmer [sic] workers in California. He wound up as an iron worker in Alaska, where he met his wife, who moved there when she was 7 with an aunt from Brooklyn. (p. 1)

Yannis (1999a) in one sentence says Gomez's father is Mexican, yet in the next says he was born in California which implies American citizenship. Actually, both are factual. Gomez is also quoted as saying: "'I'm proud of my heritage .... It would be a great honour for me to be the first Mexican-American to play in the N.H.L'" (Yannis, 1999a, p. 1). The article concludes by noting that Gomez will certainly not be sent back to the Juniors, but may start the season with the Devils' top minor league affiliate, the Albany River Rats of the American Hockey League.

The next *NYT* article highlighting Gomez is also by Yannis (1999b), noting his first NHL goal (October 16th 1999) against the New York Islanders. Again, Yannis (1999b) notes Gomez's ethnic background:

> Gomez, the 19-year-old rookie centre and first Hispanic player to be drafted in the first round, played his most impressive game for the Devils and had many people raving about his performance afterward. The highest accolades came from Coach Robbie Ftorek, who took Gomez to Long Island two nights ago to watch the Islanders' loss to the expansion Atlanta Thrashers. (p. 12)

By this game in his rookie season Gomez is leading the Devils with six assists. Bobby Holik says about his fellow team mate Gomez: "'[h]e's a pretty good little player who sees the ice so well'" (Yannis, 1999b, p. 12).

A few weeks later Lapointe (1999), within an article titled *"Rookie Wing Is Giving The Devils Pep and Pop"*, speculates whether Gomez has the endurance to sustain his amazing pace for the rest of the season and playoffs, and further suggests:

> [t]he questions don't end there. Because he is a center playing out of position on the left wing, is it not inevitable that Gomez will get hit too much into the boards or get caught in the wrong location on defense? And because Gomez has so many points so early, aren't opposing coaches and their scouts soon going to devise ways to stop him? (p. 12)

Yet, Lapointe (1999) goes on to say that Gomez against the Ottawa Senators was "positively delightful to watch" and "sparkled" setting up goals and scoring the game winner. By this stage in the season, Gomez has 21 assists and 5 goals in 19 games, and is the top points producer for the Devils. Again, Gomez is marked as having the potential to become hockey's first "Hispanic star" (Lapointe, 1999, p. 12). Gomez's inexperience with the post game interview is also noted, as Yannis (1999) points out:

> [h]e tries for the requisite humility ("I'm not doing everything myself") and he attempts the right clichés ("Great to win and get the 2 points"). Under relentless interrogation, he breaks down. His eyes brighten and he confesses: "I get excited when there's a game day and I'm about to play another National Hockey League game". (p. 12)

Lapointe (2000) continues his story on Gomez's rookie success in an article titled: *"N.H.L. Goals Are Up, But Not TV Ratings"*. By this point in his inaugural NHL season, Gomez has made the All-Star-Game and as such is described in a subheading as the: "Devils [*sic*] rookie sensation" (Lapointe, 2000, p. 7). Lapointe (2000) begins the article with this feat, but details too how Gomez's friends and family from Alaska have arrived in Toronto in a white stretch limousine to stay at an "elegant hotel". Autograph hunters even wait in the hotel lobby for Gomez. Gomez's father Carlos is described as: "an iron worker by trade who is the son of migrant farm workers from Mexico, is a lean man of modest height, casually dressed, not the limousine type" (Lapointe, 2000, p. 7). Such descriptions serve to note Gomez comes from a stable family-orientated, working class and unpretentious background. Moreover, Carlos' citizenship is not noted, unlike Yannis

(1999a) and Lapointe's (1998) earlier article, rather that he is the son of migrant Mexican farm workers.

Gomez is described as the youngest player in the All-Star Game and Lapointe (2000) notes that it is first one of the new century without Wayne Gretzky. Not that Gomez could fill Gretzky shoes' however, as a subheading reads: "Gomez may never be Gretzky, but he is appealing to young fans" (Lapointe, 2000, p. 7). Yet, Lapointe (2000) notes the lack of a megastar in the: "post-Gretzky-era is one of the several difficulties the league is facing among its growing pains as it near the end of a decade of rapid expansion" (p. 7). So although Carlos is reported as saying Scott would love to meet Gretzky, Lapointe (2000) speculates that Gomez could never be like Gretzky.

According to Lapointe (2000), the NHL continually promotes Gomez: "exposing him to target demographics, playing up the fact he is hockey's first Hispanic star" (p. 7). Hence from the earlier Lapointe (1999) article when Gomez was considered more speculatively as: "a 19-year-old from Alaska who *could* become the sport's first Hispanic star" (p. 12, my emphasis), Gomez is now considered by Lapointe (2000): "hockey's first Hispanic star" (p. 7). The rest of the article relates how Gomez is living "the dream", hanging out with rock stars and his role reversal as a junior prospect player two years ago to a fully-fledged NHL player. The last paragraphs of the article speak to the "Great One" about not playing the All-Star game due to his retirement. Gomez's stardom is apparently sealed when Gretzky bestows his approval: "'I'd like to meet him too. I'm looking forward to seeing him play'" (Lapointe, 2000, p. 7).

Gomez next appears in a Yannis' (2000a) article which details the NJ rookies including Colin White, Brian Rafalski and John Madden. Gomez is marked as not only the leading point scorer amongst NHL rookies, but as a Devils' leading scorer too. Gomez is also described as having established a team rookie record with 43 assists. Yannis' (2000b) article on June 11th notes that the NJ Devils won the Stanley Cup beating the Dallas Stars. Gomez is not really highlighted within this article except for the fact he checked Darryl Sydor on his injured knee that sent him spinning.

The *NYT's* Gomez coverage thus starts with his draft into the league and his subsequent acquisition of a permanent place on the NJ roster. Throughout the season Gomez's impressive rookie ability in scoring goals and making assists is noted, as is his

team, the Devils, winning the Stanley Cup. The *NYT's* coverage has a tendency to posit Gomez as an: "Hispanic player" and "Hispanic star", to the neglect of the fact he is also from Alaska and a second-generation American. As I address later, the *NYT* articles employ a number of racial stereotypes about Gomez as a Hispanic athlete, and Lapointe's (1998, 2000) commentary implicitly evokes the narrative of the "American Dream".

In addition, Lapointe's (2000) article argues that Gomez's access to celebrityhood, is seemingly policed by the ever-present presence of Wayne Gretzky. For example, Lapointe (2000) highlights: "Gomez may never be Gretzky, but he is appealing to young fans" (p. 7). Given the pressure to fill the Gretzky gap, due to his retirement from the NHL in 1999, the league, according to Lapointe (2000) are "heavily promoting Gomez" and particularly his status as "hockey's first Hispanic star" (p. 7). Whereas, Gretzky is granted "superstar" status for Lapointe (2000) due to his "comprehensive [hockey] skill level" (p. 7), Gomez's access to stardom, though attached to his hockey skill is also articulated to his racial ethnic heritage, that is, he is constructed as a "Hispanic star". Arguably, while Gomez's Hispanic ethnicity is marked, Gretzky's whiteness is naturalised and left unmarked.

4.2 - Gomez in *SI*: Dating Models and Commodified Celebritydom

Although my *SI* archive search (between June 1998 – July 2000) detailed 19 articles, I focus on the most substantive Gomez article written by Michael Farber (March 6th 2001).[4] This article was also subsequently selectively reprinted for the 2001 *SI* Yearbook. Farber opens by retelling an exchange that occurred at the NJ Devil's NHL-mandated sensitivity training in mid-December 1999 dealing with the issue of recent "ethnic slurs" in hockey, in which the diversity counsellor asked Gomez what he wanted out of life. Before noting his reply, Farber (2000) highlights that:

> Gomez is the first native-born Alaskan to play in the NHL. His father was born in California to illegal Mexican immigrants. His mother was born in Colombia. If affirmative action demands a first-generation Alaskan-Hispanic center-left wing, the list of job applicants will be short. (p. 1)

Whilst Farber (2000) notes Gomez's "first-generation Alaskan-Hispanic" status, he does not point out he is a second-generation American citizen. In addition, although Carlos's

American citizenship is remarked upon, Farber (2000) at the same time marks his parents (Gomez's grandparents) as "illegal Mexican immigrants". Finally, Gomez's reply to the diversity counsellor is revealed as: "'I want to date a model'" (Farber, 2000, p. 1). The team apparently found this quip quite amusing and Gomez impresses he was only kidding. Regardless, this story struck a chord with Farber who seems keen to note Gomez as "one of the boys", that is, marking his heterosexuality. For example, Farber (2000) goes on to disclose Jennifer Anniston as Gomez's "favourite actress", and retell how Gomez arrived at *SI*'s swimsuit-issue party with a camera. Later in the article, Farber (2000) also points out that Gomez's hockey successes so far, may mean that he will eventually aspire to date a supermodel.

Farber (2000) also indicates that Gomez, at the time of publication, also enjoys the rookie scoring lead of 16 goals and 41 assists. This ranks Gomez as the leading scorer amongst the NJ players, and 20th overall NHL scoring. Not too bad for a rookie who is appreciating his: "first real job, the first apartment, the first time he absolutely had to be on time, the first paycheck" (Farber, 2000, p. 1). After bonuses, according to Farber, Gomez's paycheck will be close to $1 million (1999-2000). Farber (2000) continues that Gomez is increasingly being: "singled out for attention as a celebrity", as he was introduced over the PA system during a NJ Nets game. Hence, for Farber (2000), Gomez's celebrity status is linked to the media attention and his relatively high NHL salary. Despite this, his father, Carlos reveals: "[t]he boy is totally naïve. No concept about what's going on in real life, about taxes, about grocery bills. He's never had to go through that. And you know what? I would wish it on everybody" (p. 1).

Gomez is described in this article as happy-go-lucky and this, according to Farber (2000) does not bode well for him fitting in with "the Firm".[5] As such, Jay Pandolfo (Gomez's regular season on-the-road roommate) is reported by Farber (2000) as saying: "'[m]aybe Scott represents a clash of cultures, but I think his approach is great for the team .... He's always smiling and having fun. Older guys see how happy he is and think how happy we should all be, given where we are and what we take for granted'" (p. 2). Explicitly Pandolfo is referring to Scott's presence at the serious Firm, as disruptive to that culture; implicitly however, given Gomez's mixed ethnicities, his presence in the NHL disrupts that culture too.

Farber (2000) describes Gomez as a playmaker who passes well, though not a goal scorer, Gomez:

> is a knock-kneed and pigeon-toed skater who scuttles around the ice hunched like a question mark. His shot is so unprepossessing that teammates predicted he would score a hat trick against Buffalo Sabres goalie last week because Hasek would get bored waiting for the puck to reach the net. Gomez settled for one goal. His hands, however, are lullaby soft, and his passing is as accurate as it is sometimes needlessly bold. (p. 2)

In further elaboration of his background, Farber explains that after the first time on the ice he wanted to quit. Gomez's mother, Dalia (who is detailed as a breast-feeding counsellor at an Anchorage hospital), elaborates: "'[h]e was four. He told me he didn't like it and wanted to quit, so I said, 'Sure' .... I'm like that'". Yet Carlos (Gomez's father) rejoins:

> "[h]e fell on his butt a couple of times. He was a mama's boy, and he was whining .... I'd just spent $50 for a new pair of skates. No way in hell am I going to let him quit the first day. My wife and I worked out a deal that kept her away from hockey. She could baby him after." (Farber, 2000, p. 2)

Farber (2000) argues that Gomez's background for a hockey player is "unique". Firstly, Gomez is from a State (Alaska) that has only produced four NHL hockey players. Secondly Gomez's parents' histories are described by Farber (2000) as "more rococo", in that:

> Carlos was born 47 years ago in Modesto [California], the sixth of 10 children of migrant crop pickers. The family was sent back to Mexico when Carlos was young, but he returned to San Diego--he was a U.S. citizen by birth--at six because an aunt who lived there thought he'd have better opportunities in America. When some of his older brothers moved to Alaska to work in construction in the 1960s and '70s, Carlos, an ironworker, joined them. He has been an Alaskan since '72, six years after Dalia arrived. She'd moved from Medellin to Brooklyn with an aunt in '61, and they relocated to Alaska to be with family. Carlos met Dalia when she was in high school and they eloped within a year. (p. 3)

With regards to speaking Spanish, Farber (2000) explains whilst Dalia was fluent in Spanish, Carlos only spoke "Border Spanish", thus they decided to only speak English around the house, a decision apparently they regret:

> Scott, who understands Spanish but doesn't speak it well, has had to do PEOPLE EN ESPANOL and Telemundo interviews in English, undermining the marketing impact of the NHL's nominal Hispanic star. "Scott's lazy." Carlos says, "and if he didn't have to do it, he didn't. We didn't make him learn Spanish." After getting a D in the subject, Scott did what any rational high school sophomore would – he switched to French. (p. 3)

This quote reveals that the marketing apparatus of the NHL, like the *NYT* narratives above, seem very keen to push Gomez as the "Hispanic star".

The article ends with the idea of Gomez living a dream, scoring a hat trick at Madison Square Garden against the NY Rangers, deejaying at NJ's Christmas party, sitting next to Mark Messier in the changing room at the All-Star game when Wayne Gretzky walked in, complimented Gomez on his start and posed for a picture. Farber (2000) reveals that Gomez's most memorable moment happened on the eve of the Devils' opener, when his team-mates were in an Atlanta hotel lobby waiting for him to join them for dinner and "Gomez lingered in his room, looking around at his swell digs and soaking in his good fortune" (p. 3). Although it was only mid-afternoon in Anchorage, and Gomez knew his parents would not be home, he dialled and left a message: "'[w]ow, I'm here. I don't know how long it will last, but I'm here'" (pp. 3-4). Lastly, Gomez denies that he ever has a bad day in hockey, as: "'[y]ou've got to look at the big picture. As a kid this is all that's on your mind, chasing a dream. And I'm doing it. That's pretty good, right?'" (Farber, 2000, p. 3).

Like the *NYT's* commentary, Farber's (2000) article, employs both the narrative of the "American Dream" and a number of ethnic/racial stereotypes in its construction of Gomez (see my commentary below). Gomez is hailed within this article as an emerging "celebrity", due to the media scrutiny he is receiving. Gomez's celebrity status for Farber (2000) is due to the fact Gomez was singled out and introduced to the crowd over the PA system during a NJ Nets game. In addition, Farber's commentary like some of the *NYT* articles, have a keen interest in Gomez's private life, especially the ethnic backgrounds of his parents. Given Turner et al's (2000) premise that celebritydom is granted by media

interest in someone's private life (detailed in Chapter 2), Scott Gomez has achieved celebrity status.

Echoing Lapointe's (2000) article in the *NYT*, Farber (2000) marks Gomez's star status is authorised by Gretzky. Unlike the *NYT* articles, Farber (2000) does note Gomez both as a "Hispanic star" (p. 3) and as "the first native-born Alaskan to play in the NHL" (p. 1). Furthermore, Farber (2000) wryly concludes, Gomez's lack of proficiency in Spanish languages (either Mexican or Colombian, for example) reduces his NHL marketing potential to Spanish-speaking people and nations.

Rather differently from the *NYT*'s coverage, Gomez is constructed as a young heterosexual male, who yearns to date a model. According to his dad (Carlos), Scott's early career was apparently marked by the fact he was a whingeing "mama's boy" because he kept falling down on the ice. Carlos intervened to keep Dalia out of the hockey arena, so Scott could tough it out on the ice. Hence, Griffin's (1998) argument that points out that the team-sports hero is very much tied to a dominant masculinity, exhibiting toughness and dating desirable women (p. 25) certainly has parallels with Farber's (2000) representation of Gomez.

4.3 - Home Town *ADN* Advantage: Scott Gomez - Hockey Prodigy and Alaskan Hero

Gomez was making headlines within his hometown of Anchorage, Alaska long before he came to the attention of the national and international media. I will focus on four column articles from the *ADN* sport pages, together with an exchange that appeared in the Sports Mailbag Forum. The forum details readers' comments on *ADN* sport coverage.

Gomez's signing of a NHL contract with the NJ Devils is first noted within the *ADN* by Doyle Woody's (1999a) brief article titled: *"Devils sign Alaskan to three-year contract"*. In opposition to *SI's* and *NYT's* "Hispanic" consideration of Gomez, this particular article only speaks about Gomez as "Anchorage's own", a "local" and goes onto to detail his successful debut at the World juniors playing for Team USA.

Woody (1999b) writes a more in-depth article on Gomez at Christmas. Despite newspapers calling Gomez a "budding hockey star" and "a boy wonder", Woody (1999b) argues that Gomez, the Anchorage native, is emphatically the "same as he ever was" (this

phrase is repeated throughout the article) and "skates through the NHL like a kid at play" (p. 1). Woody (1999b) further notes the media attention on Gomez regarding not only his hockey talent, but also his: "status as the first Mexican-American – more accurately, the first Mexican-Colombian-American – to skate in the NHL" (p. 1). In detailing stories from his childhood in Anchorage, however, this article seeks to suggest Scott Gomez is still the local boy from 1812 Toklat Street, "still the kid" who skated on local rinks and had his friends over to play hockey against the dining room walls of his parents' house.

Woody (1999b) gives a blow-by-blow account of Gomez's goal against the Ottawa Senators (also briefly reported in the *NYT* above). Gomez's vision on the ice is described by Lou Lamoriello as "'natural'", as: "'you don't teach hockey sense'" (p. 3). This quote was also cited in Lapointe's (1998) article in the *NYT*. According to Woody (1999b), such play has meant since mid-November 1999 Gomez has received much media scrutiny. The reporters gathering in the Devils' locker room around Gomez has turned into something of a "ritual" (Woody, 1999b, p. 4). Of course as the Devils' director of public relations, Kevin Dessart also points out, media attention is a: "'given. He's going to get more attention not just because of his background but because he's a rookie leading his team in scoring'" (Woody, 1999, p. 4).

Woody reports that Gomez is considered a favourite for the Calder Trophy for Rookie of the Year, but Gomez insists that it is not about him, but about the team winning. Having said playing hockey is about winning, when a journalist questions Gomez about his happy demeanour on the ice, he goes onto to say: "'[t]he reason we all started playing is because it is fun'" (Woody, 1999b, p. 5). On leaving the media attention in the dressing room, Gomez, who is being shadowed by Woody for this interview, is mobbed in the car park by fans wanting autographs. One-female fan is also reported as saying: "'[g]et used to this Scott. You're only going to get better and better'" (p. 5).

Woody (1999b) reveals that Scott gets as much attention from People En Espanol, Latin Athlete and Telemundo as he does from *SI*, ESPN and the Fox Sports Net. Accordingly, Gomez is described again as: "[p]roud of his roots. His father, Carlos, was born in Modesto, Calif., the son of an illegal migrant farm worker from Mexico. His mother, Dalia, was born in Colombia" (Woody, 1999b, p. 6). Although Gomez has been somewhat used to media attention throughout his youth, Woody (1996b) conjectures that Gomez:

"was unprepared for all the attention he has received as the NHL's first Latino. Growing up, he always thought of himself as Scott Gomez a hockey player from Anchorage, not Scott Gomez the Latino hockey player from Anchorage" (p. 7). Implicitly addressing a previous *NYT* article, Woody (1999b) describes that Gomez is now hailed as a "pioneer" (p. 7). Gomez is further quoted as saying:

> "[w]here I come from race didn't matter. It's no big deal, but it's the story of the month here .... I'm proud of my heritage, but sometimes they make it sound like I crossed the border two years ago with a bottle of tequila and a pair of skates and magic worked. It's special but it's all about younger kids. If a young kid sees me and wants to be Gomez, that's great". (Woody, 1999b, p. 7)

In joking about this attention, Ben Brady, a goalie friend of Gomez, is quoted by Woody as saying Gomez needed to "'work on the Latino angle"' (p. 7). Brady further suggests Gomez should wear a sombrero in his interviews and Gomez replies: "'[o]h God! Could you imagine?"' (p. 7). Woody (1999b) seemingly would rather work on the Alaskan angle, and directly after comments on Gomez's "other" heritage, states that: "[b]esides that attention his heritage merits, there's Gomez's Alaska connection .... [H]e [Gomez] is the first Alaskan to make an impact in the world's best hockey league" (p. 8). Implicitly, Woody (1999b) is highlighting Gomez as a hero for all Alaskans, whatever their ethnic backgrounds.

In explaining Gomez's "Alaskan" status, however, Woody (1999b) repeats the stories of Carlos and Dalia moving from Mexico and Colombia to the US and Alaska. Woody (1999b) further details that Gomez has loving parents. Gomez is quoted as saying: "'[m]y mom, she always has fire in her heart. She cares. And my dad, he always kept it real"' (Woody, 1999b, p. 9). Carlos is attributed for Gomez's calm resolve and Dalia for Gomez's happy-go-lucky attitude.

While Woody (1999b) describes that Gomez has been a "dominant hockey player most of his life", now Gomez is "playing against the best players in the world" (p. 13). Woody (1999b) also point out that Gomez, did not take long in winning over Devils' fans. To this effect, a NJ fan is quoted as saying: "'[w]hen I heard he got drafted, a kid called Gomez from Alaska, I was like, That's the best we can do? .... But he has been impressive, fun to watch. He's our top goal scorer"' (p. 14).

Woody (1999b) ends the article with the consideration that Gomez is a "still a kid" having fun on the ice. Daneyko, a NJ veteran, is quoted as saying: "'I consider him an old-school player. He loves to play the game, always has a smile on his face, is always willing to listen to veterans, and he respects them'" (Woody, 1999b, p. 15). Through continuing to have fun, Woody speculates that Gomez is the: "same as he ever was" (p. 16).

Woody (1999b) overwhelmingly seeks to set Gomez primarily up as the hometown boy making good. Gomez's local resonance for a number of Alaskans, particularly in Anchorage, is further indicated firstly by Freedman's (2000) and Bragg's (2000) articles that detail Gomez's triumphant July return with the Stanley Cup; and secondly, an exchange between *ADN* readers in October 2000, within Sports Mailbag Forum.[6]

Gomez makes front page of the *ADN,* with a headline that reads: *"Gomez brings Stanley Cup to Alaska"* (Bragg, 2000) with a photograph showing him holding the cup aloft in downtown Anchorage. Bragg (2000) describes Gomez as a "hometown hero" who enjoyed a "storybook rookie season in the National Hockey League" (p. 1). Bragg (2000) reports that about 8,000 people turned up to see Gomez and the cup. Bragg (2000) further details that a young male fan, who plays for the same Alaska All-Stars Mite A team for which Gomez used to play, now thinks his dreams of making the NHL and following Gomez's footsteps, may come true.

Gomez, within the same edition of the *ADN*, also makes front page of the sports' section. The headline reads: *"This Is Yours, Too"* (Freedman, 2000, p. 1) Again, Gomez appears in a photograph holding the cup aloft, surrounded by people cheering and pointing, in downtown Anchorage. Freedman (2000) details Gomez's successful rookie season with the NJ Devils, as "Forrest Gump-type" and by bringing the cup to Anchorage, Gomez is seemingly is saying: "thanks to his roots" (p. 1). Freedman (2000) further reports that: "[t]his was primarily a day for the average fan, the Alaskans who rooted for Gomez. When he starred in kids hockey, at East High, in juniors, and from afar this winter [sic]" (p. 2). Gomez, is again described as "an Alaskan, born here, raised here, trained here" (p. 2). As re-told by Freedman (2000), Anchorage's Mayor, George Wuerch, announces that Anchorage is "proud" of Gomez (p. 2). Only towards the end of the article is Gomez described as "the first player of Hispanic origins to play in the NHL" (Freedman, 2000, p. 2). Freedman's (2000) article concludes with a quote from the former captain of the Uni-

versity of Alaska's hockey team: "'[t]he hockey gods of Alaska are looking right down on us" (p. 2).

ADN's coverage of Gomez's hockey career partially parallels the *NYT's* coverage, in that it details Gomez's entry into the NHL through to the NJ Devils winning the Stanley Cup. However, not unsurprisingly, Gomez's triumphant return to Anchorage with cup makes headlines in the *ADN*, unlike the *NYT*. Similar to *SI*, the *ADN* does note Gomez as both an icon for Hispanics and Alaskans. Yet, often Gomez's Hispanic heritages are either not mentioned at all (see, Doyle, 1999a; Bragg, 2000), or at least relegated towards the end of the story (Freedman, 2000).

As illustrated by Woody's (1999b) article, media reports intertexually refer to other media narratives. For example, Lou Lamoriello's quote about Gomez as a "natural" hockey player also appears in Lapointe's (1998) article. The narrative of Gomez's family background, as demonstrated by many of the media texts included above, is also repeated through a number of newspaper articles.

Like the *SI* article and some of the *NYT* narratives, the *ADN* also shows a detailed interest in Gomez's family background, suggesting that he has achieved celebrity status (Turner et al, 2000). A number of the *ADN* articles (Woody, 1999b; Bragg, 2000; and Freedman, 2000) further indicate Gomez's growing fan base. Overwhelmingly, as explicitly addressed in Bragg's (2000) article, Gomez is penned as a "hometown hero" for the *ADN*. This construction of Gomez is also apparent from the *ADN* readers' exchanges within the Sports Mailbag Forum. I quote at length from this exchange[7]:

Published October 15, 2000
Laurie Dunnagan from Anchorage writes

> Clark, Gomez deserve three cheers for success
>
> To Chris Clark and Scotty Gomez, three cheers. They prove the old saying that those who can, go out and run their best marathon ever or get Rookie of the Year and the Stanley Cup. It's nice and only right that our successful athletes get the press coverage and attention they deserve. I've wondered what the deal is with the Daily News and Lew Freedman's love affair with Trajan Langdon, even while out for the season with an injury. We've got wonderfully accomplished stars out there actually doing great things. Clark and Gomez are real heroes.

Published October 22, 2000
John Garteiz from Anchorage writes:

Swanson deserves some local press

I noticed in the NHL box scores, reported by the Daily News on Monday, Oct. 16, for the games played on Sunday Oct. 15, the following: 'Third Period – 8, Edmonton, Clary 2 (Riesen, Swanson), 1:29.

That's it? I may be mistaken but that assist could have been the first point that Brian Swanson scored in the NHL. Even if it wasn't, my point is that the Daily News should follow his career closer.

A lot of print was given to Anchorage's home-grown Scott Gomez, especially toward the end of last season. I would like the Daily News to follow Brian Swanson's NHL career more closely. Some ways of doing this would just be to insert a small line saying "Eagle River's Brian Swanson."

Interviews via the telephone throughout the year would be welcomed. Any quotes that come from him would be enjoyable. Alaska doesn't have many professional athletes, and I believe Alaskans would enjoy following the lives of these local heroes.

Emery Cupples from Anchorage replies :

Don't confuse talent with heroism.

To say "Clark and Gomez are real heroes" (Sports Mailbag, Oct 15, C-3) is really a pathetic exaggeration of the truest definition of the word hero.

A real hero is a person who commits a selfless, unselfish act of bravery without expectation of praise, medals or monetary compensation.

The Daily News has done a good job of recognizing the athletic accomplishments of both Clark and Gomez.

The fact remains that compensated athletes such as Clark and Gomez are not real heroes.

Published October 29, 2000
Mallory Dahl from Anchorage replies:

Gomez is a hero – mine

I am a 13-yr-old 8th grader at Colony Middle School in the Palmer-Wasilla area. In response to Emery Cupples' comments, I think [Chris] Clark and [Scott] Gomez are as real heroes as anyone can get.

In my language arts class, we have been focusing on heroes for the past couple of weeks, and we've had many debates on what makes a hero a hero. I agree with Emery's definition of a hero, but he has left out a part: A hero affects

someone positively, whether it be by saving their lives, or following their dreams to athletic recognition.

I know that Gomez is a hero because he has affected my life, even if no one else's was affected. I was on a Firebirds hockey team with his sister, Natalie, one year, and he skated with us and told us a lot of things that I hadn't even begun to think about. I am not confusing heroism with being a role model. Regardless if I am the only one he has affected, Gomez is still a hero.

Patty Hargom from Palmer replies:

Gomez gives back to his community

I would like to comment on Emery Cupples' letter in Sunday, Oct. 22, Mailbag, "Don't confuse talent with heroism."

Mr. Cupples states that Chris Clark and Scotty Gomez aren't heroes because they don't fit his definition of the word.

I don't have the privilege on knowing Ms. Clark, but I have great admiration for her accomplishments. She has been an inspiration to all Alaskans.

I do, however, know Scotty. He lived in Palmer for several years when he was younger and our family knew him well. He was a terrific kid and has become a terrific young man. When he brought the Stanley Cup to Alaska this summer, he made the most of his 24 hours. He didn't sit and let everyone come to him; he took it to hospitals, etc., so those who couldn't get out could join the celebration.

I watched him during the State Fair in Palmer this year. He spent hours walking around the grounds talking to kids and encouraging them. He never stopped smiling, even when they mobbed him.

Personally, I don't believe you have to rush into burning buildings to be a hero. I believe you can gain that status by giving unselfishly of your time to be an exemplary role model to young people. Scott Gomez fits that bill to a T.

The sentiments expressed in the above letters highlight that Gomez by giving unselfishly to his community and affecting people's lives in a positive manner, is an uncomplicated and "hometown" hero for some Alaskans; yet for others, Gomez status as a professional athlete, precludes him from *that* title. This echoes Lasch's (1980) commentary that it is difficult to bestow the title hero on star athletes who are paid salaries. The former heroic construction of Gomez is in direct contrast to the *NYT* narratives, that hail Gomez an "Hispanic star". Audiences, or more specifically *ADN* sport readers, by constructing and identifying Gomez in different ways and across different registers, do not however, speak about heroism or Gomez in a singular way. Arguably this exchange further points out that readers of newspapers or audiences more generally, do not simply

passively read, but rather respond and contest coverage by writing letters to editors and expressing their thoughts on particular issues.

4.4 - The Gomez Media Narratives: Reading Inter(-)texually and Interrupting the Work of Representation

> Behind every hero is a group of skilful and faithful manipulators (Fishwick, 1954, p. 228).

By reading inter(-)texually, I want to be attentive to both the play across the Gomez texts and the socio-historical context of reception. By interrupting the work of representation, I mean that we are not always aware of the rules and classification systems of dominant discourses; yet, similar to rules of language, we can inspect and "open up a discourse to its foundations" (Hall, 1985, p. 106). By interrupting discourse, Hall (1985) implies that researchers confront the "limits" of discourse. For example, if discourse, inflected by Hall's concept of articulation, is a space that allows individuals to comprehend the world through meaning, then conceivably the "limits" to discourse include absences, un-intelligibility and points of *dis*-articulation. With reference to the latter, if articulation produces the effect of unity that temporarily stabilises meaning, dis-articulation would be an unravelling of such meaning.

By reading across the above narratives, I do not suppose to produce a complete or final story about Gomez. As highlighted within Chapter 1, I have selected some texts and excluded others, which sets certain limits to my story. Gaps, however, can also be attributed to a lack of media attention on Gomez. For example, the *NYT* although highlighting Gomez as a promising prospect, to my knowledge never reported at the time, on his Rookie-of-the-Year award. Notably too, column inches devoted to Gomez are quite different across the above narratives. For example *SI*, a magazine dedicated to sport, has more space to write about a particular athlete than the *NYT* sports section. Moreover, I do not presume any commentary could know Gomez once and for all, even if I read and included every single text ever written on Gomez. Not only, as argued in Chapter 2, is Gomez as author displaced by how audiences (and fans specifically) read, use and re-use his image, which entails a proliferation of meanings about Gomez, but as Whannel (1999) argues, our knowledge about athlete stars/heroes is media mediated. As outlined in

Chapter 2, I specifically want to be attentive to the different ways the labels hero or celebrity operate across a number of narratives, which articulate to a number of discourses about ability, gender, ethnicity, sport ethics, nationhood, sexuality and so on.

4.41 – Scott Gomez: Hockey, Hispanic, Alaskan Hero or Star?

The last newspaper narratives, consisting of a mail exchange between *ADN* readers together with the article by Bragg (2000), construct Gomez quite differently from the other texts. With reference to the latter, for Bragg (2000) Gomez is a "hometown hero". With regards to the former, Gomez earns the status of "real hero" and "local hero" for John, Laurie, Mallory, and Patty through his accomplishments as a hockey player, his unselfish bravery, and his positive affect on individuals, together with the fact he gives back to the Anchorage community and that he is an exemplary role model for young people. Yet, for another *ADN* reader, Emery, whilst acknowledging Gomez as an accomplished athlete, argues that his status as hero is problematic, as compensated athletes could never be "real heroes".

The above narratives demonstrate a regional, rather than a national, loyalty to Gomez. Gomez as both hero and celebrity is traced onto his Alaskan subjectivity. For example, Laurie speaks about Gomez as a "wonderfully accomplished star" and effortlessly switches to discussing him as a "real hero". Accordingly, some of the *ADN* narratives reflect Drucker and Cathcart's (1994) premise that "[c]ontemporary heroes must also be celebrities" (p. 10). Emery's suggestion that Gomez cannot be a hero due to his professional athlete status, support Lasch's (1980) idea of "degraded sport". Contemporary "degraded sport" for Lasch (1980) cannot have heroes due to the large "salaries paid to star athletes" (p. 211). Gomez's construction as hero and role model for a number of fans and journalists in Anchorage, interject Boorstin's (1962) elitist suggestion that a celebrated media figure cannot also be considered affirmatively as a "real hero".

Woody's (1999) article also in the *ADN* describes Gomez as a hockey "star" (p. 2 and p. 4) and "a boy wonder" with reference to his hockey skills and "a pioneer" (p. 7) with reference to his status as "the NHL's first Latino" (p. 7). Yet *ADN,* also stress Gomez as a pioneer for Alaskans, as Gomez is also the first Alaskan-born player to make the NHL. Indeed Gomez is quoted within this article as saying race did not matter in Alaska,

it was only when he started playing in NJ that it became "'the story of the month'" (Woody, 1999, p. 7). Anson Carter, a Canadian player, currently contracted to the Edmonton Oilers, echoes Gomez's sentiments about race. Carter argues that when he played college hockey for Michigan State, he was treated as novelty "black player". Whereas in Canada, Carter argues his playing ability is seemingly the focus over the issue of race (quoted by CNN/SI, 1997, p. 2).

The other included media stories never use hero to explicitly label Gomez. Firstly, the *NYT* employed the descriptions: "Hispanic star" (Lapointe 1999, 2000); "pioneer as the first Hispanic player" (Yannis, 1999a, p. 1) and "Devils [*sic*] rookie sensation" (Yannis, 2000a, p. 2). Evidence of Gomez's star quality is given through: his ability to score points (Lapointe, 1999; Yannis, 1999b), his appeal to young fans (Lapointe, 2000), his demographic/ethnographic pulling power for audiences (Lapointe, 2000), and finally the "royal seal" of approval is given by Wayne Gretzky (Lapointe, 2000). Gretzky's authorisation of Gomez's star status is also given within Farber's (2000) article in *SI*. Gomez's Hispanic star status is seemingly premised on the absence of the "white" super star of hockey, Wayne Gretzky.

Secondly, Farber (2000) further notes that Gomez is being increasingly singled out through fans' attentions, together with the media and the promotional mechanisms of the NHL. Again, *SI* highlights, similar to the *NYT*, Gomez's stellar rookie season and "rococo" family background for motives behind the current media hype and fan interest. Gomez's heroic status as witnessed by the *ADN* narratives, is thus confined and authorised to his hometown and attached to his Alaskan ethnicity.

The above narratives thus illustrate how one *ADN* reporter together with a number of *ADN* readers consider Gomez a hometown hero, yet is hailed as a star or celebrity by the wider media narratives. Consequently, the arguments given in Chapter 2, that heroes, or at least the label of heroism, is in decline has some parallels here (see Boorstin, 1962; Harris, 1994 and Smith, 1973, for example). Conceivably too, Gomez is still only a rookie in the NHL, and perhaps the seasoned sports writers in the *NYT* and *SI* do not think his deeds have yet earned him the title hero. However, fans consider Gomez a hero, as demonstrated by the *ADN* readers' letters.

Gomez, as evidenced through the narratives, is singled out as both the first Hispanic and Alaskan player to make the NHL. Both rarities seemingly make for an interesting and sellable news story. Tellingly, Gomez's mediated construction as the first Hispanic player is accompanied by a number of stereotyping practices. I now turn to consider media stereotyping practices.

4.42 – Coping With Difference(s): Stereotyping Practices of the Media

> I'm proud of my heritage, but sometimes they make it sound like I crossed the border two years ago with a bottle of tequila and a pair of skates and magic worked. (Scott Gomez, 1999)[8]

Reading across the media narratives serves to illustrate that Gomez is pulled and pushed, that is, made to mean, in certain directions. All the media narratives note Gomez's skill and successful debut as a NHL player, but this ability and the construction of him as a hero or star is continually articulated to his ethnic/racial subjectivities. Gomez's star status articulates to his Hispanic subjectivity, most notably in the *NYT*. Chapter 2 noted that a number of academic commentators on sport used star or celebrity with specific reference to promotional mechanisms of the media and commodification, whereas hero is saved for the more serious matters of nationhood and masculinity. Conceivably, then, Gomez's construction as a "Hispanic star" in the *NYT* is attached to his commodity form, something to be brought and sold. Yet, Gomez's heroic status for *ADN* is tellingly articulated to his Alaskan subjectivity. The inter(-)textual antagonism implies that Gomez's Alaskan subjectivity (and heroic status) runs contrary to his Hispanic subjectivity (and star status). In turn, Gomez's plural ethnicities are differently erased across the narratives. In claiming Gomez for different groups of people through labelling him as either Hispanic or Alaskan, suggests that the conventions of sports journalism cannot cope with or fully represent Gomez's mixed background. This is not to suggest that Gomez could ever fully be encapsulated by one story or image. Rather reading inter(-)textually there appears to be a crisis of representation. In attempting to grasp such crisis, my interest is not in what the different journalists intend by their comments, but the effects of their representation of Gomez. Why for example, are these particular descriptors and stories of

Gomez used, above others? In addition, what knowledges and practices are used to make Gomez intelligible?

Hall (1997c) notes that cultural representation has a fascination with otherness. As previously outlined, Hall's (1997c) commentary has additional relevance to my project as his arguments are illustrated though a number of print-media narratives and images that evoke racial and ethnic differences. Reading across the above media representations suggests Gomez is media managed by splitting him into someone who is *either* Latino *or* Alaskan, rather than someone is who *both* Latino *and* Alaskan. Such binary categorisation echoes Hall's (1997a) comments that: "culture depends on giving meaning within a classificatory system. The marking of difference is thus the basis of that symbolic order which we call culture" (p. 236). Hall's (1997c) commentary is implicitly highlighting (after Foucault) that culture is not simply a "way of life", but a way of life that refers to certain "processes, categories and knowledges through which communities are defined" (Donald and Rattansi, 1992, p. 4).

Arguably, Gomez's failure to fit neatly into either the subject categories of Latino or Alaskan, disturb the cultural order that demands stable classifications, that stay to their assigned unitary place - see Hall's (1997c) discussion of Douglas' (1966) work. Gomez's plural or hybrid subjectivities seemingly have issues for representation. Hence, he remains ambiguous, "out of place", and between cultures (Douglas, 1966; Hall, 1997c; Stallybrass and White, 1986). One very pertinent reminder of Gomez's outside status is the continual description of his parents, more specifically his father's parents as illegal immigrants (see Lapointe, 1998; Yannis, 1999a; Farber, 2000; and Woody, 1999b). This pervasive description serves to place Gomez's parents, and arguably Gomez himself, as continual travellers, migrating and crossing the border to the land of opportunity (see especially Farber, 2000, p. 3).

Scott Gomez, as the above quotation highlights, remarks that "they" – arguably the media, the NHL, and NJ – make it sound like he was a recent immigrant across the Mexican border, rather than a second generation American citizen. Gomez's friend Ben Brady is even quoted as saying rather ironically that Gomez needs to "work on the Latino angle", becoming more authentically ethnic by wearing a sombrero to interviews. Brady's sarcasm here points to the fact athletes are not un-reflexive of the fact they are

packaged and stereotyped in particular ways. Yet, Brady's comment further points out that Gomez for "them" cannot logically be *both* someone who is born in Alaska and an American citizen, *and* someone of Colombian-Mexican ethnicities.

When the media narratives do posit Gomez as someone with Colombian-Mexican heritages, they do so through a number of racist stereotypes. Lapointe's (1998) inaugural Gomez article in the *NYT* not only highlights that he is an "exotic" choice for an NHL team, but includes quotes that describe Gomez as possessing "natural instincts" and "excitable", together with the fact he is overly confident of his abilities. Such descriptors of Gomez echo Hoose's (1989) and Bretón (2000) commentaries on the stereotypical representation of Latino baseball players.

Farber's (2000) descriptions in *SI* also mark Gomez's Colombian-Mexican heritages as "rococo" (p. 3) and his puck passing as "needlessly bold" (p. 2). The latter evokes the idea of a player out of control, which, as previously indicated, point to a mediated stereotype of Latino athletes (Hoose, 1989 and Bretón, 2000). Farber's (2000) continual recourse to Gomez as happy-go-lucky character, who is always having fun, also mirrors Hoose's (1989) comments that the media typecast Latino athletes as: "cheerful, peppery character[s] from south of the border, a stablemate of Cisco and Pancho, Cheech and Chong, Ricky Ricardo, José Jimenez, Trini Lopez, and Walt Disney's motor-mouthed, cigar-chomping parrot José Carioca" (p. 92).

The anecdote Farber's (2000) article starts with, that is, Gomez's longing to date a model, also arguably reflect another way Latinos and African-American male athletes are classified. The construction to which I am referring is the image of the oversexed athlete, (see: Cole and Denny, 1994; Davis and Harris, 1998; Hoose, 1989; Lule, 1995; McDonald, 1996). The re-telling of Gomez's desire to date a model and Farber's (2000) suggestion that he may just date a supermodel, occurs within a narrative that stresses his hockey successes to date. Arguably, the "model" within this narrative operates as a reward for Gomez. In addressing the coding of male sexuality within cultural representation, Dyer (1993) points out: "[e]ven if the narrative appears to be about war, crime, business or whatever, the drive to climax is so bound up with the promise of a woman at the end that all stories seem to be modelled on male sexuality" (p. 120). Conceivably, Farber's (2000) article wants Gomez to climax to complete the heterosexual success narrative.

The former point, concerning Gomez's family ethnic heritages as "rococo", which means a decorative, extravagant or unsymmetrical style of decoration, also has racist implications. Arguably, the idea of Gomez's family heritages as ornamental and excessive effectively trivialises their backgrounds. Both Gomez and his parents have American citizenship, so describing their heritages as "rococo" conceivably produces and reproduces the US as a space of ethnic-racial unadorned purity (read "white"), where the heterogeneous or plural ethnicities of its people are denied (Said, 1993).

Following Dyer's (1993) reworking of Klapp's (1962) distinctions between stereotypes versus social-types, Gomez is socially-typed within the *ADN* as an Alaskan hero, and thus someone who positively belongs within the boundaries of the Alaskan community. Scott's admittance as an Alaskan is also articulated to his successful debut as a NHL hockey player. However, Gomez's mediated construction as a Hispanic star operates through a number of reductive stereotypes that place him as an over-sexed migrant worker who possesses "natural instincts", and thus someone who clearly does not belong.

The above comments are not to deny that Gomez's youth and personality may entail that he is having fun or a highly skilled player in the NHL, or that his desire to date a model is an accurate quote. Rather given Hoose's (1989) and Bretón's (2000) remarks, my commentary seeks to highlight that Latino athletes are continually marked in very particular ways that reproduces racist stereotypes. After all, why are these specific anecdotes, classifications and descriptors used above others? In contrast, Gomez's construction as an Alaskan hero, though reductive, does not entail the equivalent stereotyping.

4.43 – Articulating the American Dream, Diversity and Immigration through Scott Gomez

> The American Dream posits that if individuals just work hard enough they can achieve financial and other successes. For the American Dream myth to persist, it needs success stories. (Davis & Harris, 1998, p. 166)

> The Latin has always been big-league baseball's cheap labor, its migrant worker, the boy who starts as an infant with a cardboard glove, reaches baseball maturity early, and would gladly play for free. (Hoose, 1989, p. 95)

Most of the media narratives, implicitly and explicitly, describe Gomez transcending his working class background, "making it" in the utopic bright lights of the NHL. Yet, Gomez's transcendence through the American Dream, as Gomez and his friend Ben Brady note, is one that (mis-)places him as a recent immigrant across the border, tequila bottle in tow. Hence, Gomez's NHL and mediated poster-boy authorisation and "Hispanic star" status, comparable to Hoose's (1989) remarks on Latino baseball players, lie alongside his colonised construction as a migrant or immigrant labourer. My consideration of Gomez as a migrant worker does not necessarily relate to Gomez's NHL wages (following Hoose, 1989), rather, the incessant telling within many of the media narratives of the story of his illegal immigrant grandparents crossing the border for work is of issue. Alongside his family's history, Gomez himself reflects that he too is frequently represented as a recent border crosser or migrant worker.

The repetitive telling of Gomez's grandparents crossing the border finds parallels with Chow's (1998) commentary around community admittance. Communities, and nations more generally, are not only described through who are included, the "we", but also who are excluded, the "them" (Chow, 1998; West, 1990). Gomez's mediated construction, especially in the *NYT*, continually precludes him from the American "we". For example, Lapointe (1998), in describing Gomez's and Malhotra's positions in the NHL Draft, emphatically states: "[t]he Islanders stayed *domestic*, choosing a wing from Cleveland" (p. 2, emphasis added). Given Lapointe's previous claim that Gomez and Malhotra are empirical evidence of the "diversity" in the Draft, the choice of "domestic" here, suggests neither Gomez nor Malhotra are from North America. In fact, Gomez is a second generation American and Malhotra is a second generation Canadian. Hence, increasing "diversity" in the NHL implies a narrow conception of belonging in America or Canada.

In order to elaborate on my line of reasoning, remaining cognisant of the politics and poetics of representation, firstly, I address Gomez's positioning within the overdetermined narrative of the "American Dream". Secondly, I comment on Gomez's "migrant" and marginal status, through reading Gomez alongside current US immigration policy. Thirdly, I interrupt Gomez's marginality through a redeployment of Anzaldua's (1999) *borderlands*, via Hall's concept of articulation.

4.431- Scott and the American Dream

The American Dream narrative - the rags-to-riches tale in the "land of opportunity" - as Oriard (1982) argues, is readily articulated to tales of athletic heroism. The American media continually pen African-American athlete success stories that include the rhetoric of upward mobility (Davis and Harris, 1998). Such stories provide fuel to perpetuate this myth (Andrews, 1996a/b; Davies and Harris, 1998; Dyson, 1993; Kellner, 1996; and McDonald, 1996). Latino baseball players and boxers are also implicated in the trope of the American Dream (Bretón, 2000; Hoose, 1989; and Kellner, 1996).

Many of the media narratives describe Gomez as someone living the dream and achieving success by being the first Hispanic hockey player in the NHL (see: Bragg, 2000; Farber, 2000; Freedman, 2000; Lapointe, 1998, 2000; Woody, 1999b; and Yannis, 1999a). The transcendence promised within the American Dream is predicated on hard work (Davies and Harris, 1998). Yet, as Davis and Harris (1998) further stress, surely there is disparity between the same representation that on the one hand posits the American Dream narrative of rewarding hard work, and on the other hand, employing the pervasive stereotype of African-American athletes possessing "natural" athleticism? Latino athletes, as previously indicated, including Scott Gomez are also constructed as "natural" athletes.

The progressive rhetoric of the American Dream serves to construct America as the "land of dreams" and the "land of opportunities", where *even* the grandson of illegal Mexican crop pickers, like Scott Gomez, can make it. Some of the media narratives explicitly address Gomez's transcendence as one of class (see Lapointe, 1998 and 2000, especially). Yet, given the continual use of border transgression within the media narratives implies that transcendence is also one of ethnicity and race. Kellner's (1996) comments on Jordan also reflect how the American Dream is especially translated on the race-class articulation: "a Black superstar, he [Jordan] presents the fantasy that anyone can make it in the society of competition and status, that one can climb the ladder and overcome the limitations of race and class" (p. 462). As I elaborate later, in Gomez's case, his acculturation into American society seems complete, because as Farber (2000) notes, he only speaks English fluently.

Yet, reading across the narratives highlight that Gomez's making it never completely authorises his American citizenship. The rhetoric of transcendence, where America is constructed as the land of opportunity and dreams, is framed for Gomez within racist descriptors that emphasise his "natural" athleticism and "exoticism". Gomez's making it is thus attached to a number of contingencies that continually dis-place him as an "American".

Gomez is authorised as an Alaskan (thus, an American), however, within the *ADN* narratives. Most, notably, Gomez's Alaskan subjectivity operates at the expense of any recognition of his "other" subjectivities within the *ADN*. Gomez's making it within the *ADN*, thus becomes the success story of the Alaskan hockey player. This is illustrated most obviously by Freedman (2000). Freedman (2000) goes to great lengths to describe Gomez's "roots" as Alaskan only to relegate his status as the "first player of Hispanic origins to play in the NHL" (p. 2) to the very end of the article. This notable relegation, seemingly affirms Anzaldúa's (1999) and Gómez-Pena's (1993) suggestion that the border never ends even on legal admittance to the US, but continually operates wherever there are "Hispanic–White" relations. This is not to say that this operation is evenly distributed amongst the media narratives. As detailed above, the *NYT's* articles tend to totally neglect that Gomez is an American citizen, whereas the *ADN* narratives want to hail Gomez as an Alaskan hero. Given the US's relations with Spanish speaking countries, especially Mexico, arguably, the omnipresence of this border is comparable to the maintenance of contemporary colonialism, noted by post-colonial theorists (see Chapter 3). Conspicuously, it is only through the *ADN* forgetting or relegating Gomez's Colombian-Mexican heritages, is his Alaskan-American status temporarily affirmed.

4.432 – Diversity, Border(land)s and Proposition 187

> The colonized is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his production to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards. He becomes whiter as he renounces his blackness, his jungle. (Fanon, 1967, p. 18)

The inter(-)textual splitting of Gomez across the media representations confer a schizophrenic struggle of Gomez's Spanish subjectivities *versus* his Alaskan-American

subjectivities. This antagonism conceivably has resonance at the level of language. As noted in Chapter 3, Anzaldúa's (1999) and Fanon (1967) concur that speech is integral to ethnic and cultural identity. Gomez, in only speaking English fluently (Farber, 2000), has arguably been acculturated into US society at the level of language.

Yet, as Fanon (1967) points out, mastery of the coloniser's language is not enough to be an authorised speaker in the coloniser's culture. Mastering the master's language does not end subject alienation, it merely isolates the colonised subject from herself/himself as well as from her/his community/ies. Reading across the media narratives supports Gomez's argument that he is continually represented as a recent immigrant to American shores. Gomez's fluent English, his birthplace of Alaska and presumably his possession of legal documentation that confirms his American citizenship, is apparently not enough for him to be publicly recognised and authorised as an American. The media representations of Gomez generally support Fanon's (1967) argument that the colonised "man" is only ever granted "honorary citizenship" (p. 38) and is perpetually sealed in the colour of his skin. Reading across the narratives suggests that Gomez is not fully admitted into the US community; hence, his status is "honorary", despite his fluency in English. Yet, his non-fluency in Spanish languages also entail he is not fully admitted to Colombian or Mexican communities either. Anzaldúa (1999), comparable to Fanon's arguments in *BSWM*, describes that Chicano/as, who are caught in the slipstream between Anglo-American and Mexican cultural values and identities internalise this non-admittance into a psychological borderland conflict. This conflict is evident when Gomez's points out that "they" continually posit him as a recent immigrant, tequila bottle in tow.

Anzaludua's (1999) thesis seemingly recommends that Gomez should speak all the languages of his plural heritages. More specifically, Anzaludua (1999) advises the development of a patois, "a forked tongue, a variation of two languages" (p. 77). Yet, even if Gomez did speak Columbian or Mexican fluently, or even developed a patois, after Fanon (1967), Gomez would not be admitted as someone who fully belongs in America. This latter point is premised, after Fanon (1967), on America remaining a colonial context (with specific reference to "Hispanic-White" relations), rather than a revolution-

ary context that allows Gomez's English to be politically re-deployed (see Cheyfitz's, (1991) arguments detailed in Chapter 3).

Anzaldúa's (1999) commentary around how authorities choose to classify people is also relevant to the media's representation of Gomez. The *NYT's* articles continually refer to Gomez as "Hispanic", as does *SI* and the *ADN*. Although, both the latter narratives further address Gomez some what more appropriately, as a Columbian-Mexican-American. "Hispanic", as Anzaldúa (1999) points out is "derived from "Hispanis (España, a name given to the Iberian Peninsula in ancient times when it was part of the Roman Empire) and is a term designated by the U.S. government to make it easier to handle us on paper" (p. 119). For Anzaldúa (1999) just as Spanish languages are lost through migration, classifications and naming by authorities of diverse people's heritages are another method of acculturation into the US. Overall, Anzaldúa (1999) prefers the label Chicana/o. Chicana/s refers to people of Spanish decent who were born and/or raised in the US and according to Anzaldúa (1999) was coined in 1965 by Cesar Chavez a political activist.

Gomez is positioned as empirical evidence of NHL diversity in Lapointe's (1998) article and this diversity seemingly runs contrary to the idea that Gomez is also an American. As I indicated above, Gomez's prevention from being considered "domestic" conceivably means NHL diversity is premised on the idea of a non-diverse American nation (read "WASP"). Again, this effaces and forgets the fact the American nation is/was always already diverse. As Said (1993) points out: "[b]efore we can agree on what American identity is made of, we have to concede that as an immigrant settler society superimposed on the ruins of considerable native presence, American identity is too varied to be a unitary and homogenous thing" (p. xxv). Rather than diversity being embraced as constitutive of nation, it operates within Lapointe's (1998) narrative progressively, *from* a homogenous and pure past. This has the effect of re-authorising the nation, and conceivably the NHL too, as spaces beyond race and ethnicity, as Scott Gomez's presence is offered as proof of *increasing* diversity. In elaboration, whereas Gomez is presented as confirmation of the NHL's diversity (seemingly where race and ethnicity are no longer a "problem"); the American nation is not allowed to be diverse (thus, plural heritages are white washed into homogenous space).

The NHL, until fairly recently, has actively prevented men of colour form playing (Abdel-Shehid, 2000 and Genosko, 1999). Despite the formation of the NHL in 1917, Genosko (1999) points out that it was not until 1958 that Willie O'Ree, who is widely heralded as the first black player of the NHL, "broke the colour barrier" (p. 144). O'Ree in fact played only sporadically for the Boston Bruins in the late 1950s and early 1960s and played the majority of his career in the Western Hockey League (Genosko, 1999). Genosko (1999) points out that despite the excellent hockey skills of Manny McIntyre, Herb and Ossie Carnegie, who all played in the Quebec senior hockey league in the 1940s, none of them played in the NHL. Herb Carnegie, who was the triple-time MVP (Most Valuable Player) for the Quebec league, was conspicuously never drafted, and this oversight is offered by Genosko (1999) as "NHL's – specifically Conn Smythe's – backwardness and conservatism" (p. 144).

After O'Ree's admittance, Bill Riley, Tony McKegney, Mike Marson and Grant Furhr and Ted Nolan, continued to open up the white preserve of NHL hockey in the 1970s and early 1980s. The late 1980s and 1990s saw Freddie Braithwaite, Donald Brashear, Anson Carter, Mike Grier, Jerome Igninla, Paul Kariya, Gino Odjick, and Chris Simon admitted to the NHL. O'Ree is actually the current director of the NHL/USA Hockey Diversity Task Force.[9] The task force was formed to promote hockey to kids of colour, as well as counsel players and teams on issues of ethnocentrism and racism (Iole, 1999). O'Ree finds it heartening that more minorities are entering "'the game"'(Iole, 1999). Malhotra and Gomez being drafted in 1998 are proof for O'Ree of "'the progress we're making"' (Iole, 1999, p.1).

Yet, as Abdel-Shehid (2000) notes with specific reference to the Canadian nation-hood, the sentiment of multicultural progression forgets "other" lost histories of hockey, including First Nations, Japanese Canadian and Chinese Canadian players who have participated in hockey for over 100 years. I would also add women's hockey into the consideration. Moreover, Abdel-Shehid (2000) goes onto to suggest that hockey does not have to be written around "firsts" or through whiteness. Subaltern genealogies of hockey, as Abdel-Shehid (2000) concludes, are yet to be written. Yet, as previously argued, sports journalism, largely written by white males, has a fascination both with "firsts" and with difference. Arguably, this ubiquitous dual fascination demands critical attention. Fur-

thermore, in a more complicated way, Gomez is actually a first twice over, as both the *first* Hispanic and *first* Alaskan player in the NHL.

As noted across the media narratives, Gomez's admittance into the NHL is thus accompanied by his first status for different communities. Given the NHL's exclusionary practices in the past, Gomez's presence does suggest, as O'Ree argues, a change in who is admitted into the NHL. More cynically, this change, as implied in Farber's (2000) article, could be read alongside the NHL's desire to market their product locally (to a large population of Chicana/o peoples) and globally (to Spanish speaking nations). As Kellner (1995) also wryly notes: "[d]ifference sells. Capitalism must constantly multiply markets, styles, fads, and artefacts to keep absorbing consumers into its practices and lifestyles" (p. 40).

As I argued above, Gomez, despite his admittance into the NHL, only retains honorary American citizenship. One practice that governments employ, and the American government specifically to demarcate "us" from "them" and cope with "border others" is through immigration policies. If communities are defined as much through their exclusionary practices, as argued by Chow (1998) and West (1990), then a consideration of America's border relations enables a broader discussion of America. With salience to the repetitive construction of Gomez as a migrant presumably looking for work in the land of opportunity, the passing of California's Proposition 187 in November of 1994 has some resonance. Aimed principally at peoples crossing the Mexico-US border, 187 denies health care (except in life or death cases) and public education to undocumented immigrants (Song, 2001). It instructed local police, teachers, health care workers and social service workers to check the immigration status of everyone they encountered (even children) who looked like they were "non-Americans". Once checked, undocumented people were then reported to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (Revolutionary Worker, 1999). As Song (2001) points out, however, possessing government documents (landed immigration status or passport) failed to immune those who "looked illegal" from abuse and discrimination by other Californians. For example:

> On election day (1994), an angry motorist, stopped by gas station manager Juan Ventura from butting ahead of line, got out of his car and began shouting, "You Mexicans! We're going to throw the lot of you out!" Juan

> Ventura is a former Salvadorian who is a legal permanent resident of the US. (Song, 2001)

The passing of Proposition 187 merely supports movements like "Save our State" which argue illegal immigrants are somehow ruining the "American standard of living". Yet, as Song (2001) points out, it is the same largely underpaid menial piecework of illegal immigrant workers that enable this standard of living. Song (2001) continues that contrary to the myth that all immigrants are welfare drains: "[t]hose immigrant families who arrived in the US before 1980 boast a higher average income than that of native-born Americans" (p. 3). Moreover, two years after this bill was passed Bill Clinton signed a welfare reform bill[10] which dramatically reduced benefits for legal (and illegal) immigrants. By doing so Clinton made Proposition 187's anti-immigration provisions part of federal law. Documents (including citizenship) or no documents (read "illegal"), such events demonstrate that people of colour can never really "belong" in America.

The idea of Gomez being a Hispanic star has the potential of offering a powerful cultural model with which marginalized groups can identify. Gomez's entry into the NHL actually coincides with the partial repeal of Proposition 187. Conceivably, Gomez's admittance into the NHL can be metaphorically read along side his admittance in American society more generally. Given the NHL's recent past and the US's governments current and former treatment of immigrants, just how tolerant and inclusionary are both communities?

Gomez's media narratives see him placed and displaced, pushed and pulled through media representations, as an icon for Alaskans, the NHL and various people of Spanish descent. Gomez's forgotten Alaskan ethnicity for some mainstream US newspapers and magazines serve to reinforce the idea that Gomez is not really an American. Although Gomez is temporarily fixed as a star, a celebrity or hero, to the discourses of ethnicity, sexuality, ability and so in, reading across these narratives underscores that "Gomez" refuses final stabilization around one meaning.

4.433 – "Knowing" Scott: Margins(-Borderland Articulations-)Centres

West (1990), after Hall, argues against interrupting the strategies of representation with positive homogenous communities or essential identities. West (1990) further rec-

ommends that the tactics employed by cultural workers need to do more than contest stereotypes, though he maintains that interrupting reductive labelling remains "a significant though limited adventure" (p. 587). Instead, West (1990) ardently maintains the need to construct: "more multi-valent and mutli-dimensional responses that articulate the complexity and diversity of Black practices in the modern and postmodern world" (p. 587). Conceivably, my desire to extend Anzaldúa's *borderlands* consciousness to consider, through the idea of articulation, that by straddling different cultures, individuals could be in both positions of empowerment and disempowerment, is a response to West's (1990) call.

My above musings address Scott Gomez's minority status including, his continual non-admittance to American citizenship. Yet, there are aspects that place him back at centre. After all, Gomez is a celebrated male athlete hero or star. Thus the traditional hero myth, highlighted in Chapter 2, remains somewhat intact. I am still speaking of a man as a highly skilled athlete enjoying media coverage, which means it is "business as usual" for the NHL. Farber's (2000) article also continually marks Gomez's attraction to the opposite sex, which re-affirms the NHL as a heterosexual arena. As argued, Gomez's story and his high NHL salary are readily accommodated to the rhetoric of the "American Dream". Gomez's class, for example, is often evoked with reference his parents' backgrounds, including their employment. Hence, representations of race, ethnicity, sexuality and class articulate with one another across and within the Gomez texts.

All the above media narratives, except the *ADN* reader exchange, include quotes from the family, presumably to increase the authenticity of the story. Yet, Carlos (Gomez's father) is far more frequently quoted than Dalia (Gomez's mother). This has the effect of silencing Dalia from Gomez's making it hockey story. When Farber's (2000) article does have some quotes from Dalia, they serve to emphasise her role as Gomez's carer; whereas Carlos had the role of keeping him tough and focused on the ice. Dalia's absence and Carlos' presence reproduces the idea that sport is a male homosocial space. Gomez's toughing it out on the ice speaks to Griffin's comments that the concept of the team-sports hero is tied to dominant masculinity (as detailed above).

Gomez's family life across the narratives is also depicted as one of stability and love. Continual deferment to Gomez's family also underscores his youth. For example,

both Woody's (1999) article in *ADN* and Farber's (2000) article in *SI* seek to place Gomez as a kid at play in the NHL. Yannis (1999b) too highlights Gomez's youthful inexperience with interviewers, but Yannis (1999a) also notes Gomez's admittance into the NHL as a right of passage, a coming of age for Gomez.

The mediated construction of Gomez as a hero remains overshadowed within this chapter to how Gomez is made to mean in other ways through a number of discourses and practices. For example, overtly Gomez is posited as both an Alaskan hero and Hispanic star. Covertly Gomez is constructed as a migrant worker and heterosexual male. The media with reference to Gomez's Spanish heritages deploys stereotyping practices. Gomez's meanings are hardly sites of neat intersections, but those of cultural articulations or "white noise". White noise has additional resonance to the Gomez texts. Even when Gomez is constructed as someone of American citizenship, his other heritages are whitewashed. Yet, white noise read through Anzaldúa's (1999) borderlands is a space where Gomez can remain illusive in resisting classification. Arguably, not being able to locate someone through language or discourse, mean the borderlands are sites of dis-articulations and articulations. Dis-articulation, refers to a crisis or representation that relates to impossible task of representing someone fully on paper (or by any other means). Hall points out, that concept of articulation is an invaluable way to understand the alliances between structures and discourses, which enable the world to mean. Hall's "no guarantee" clause reminds us that articulation is a historical process. Accordingly, negative articulations, for example between a racist practices of stereotyping inflecting an individual's construction of their own ethnic or racial identity, are not natural and inevitable, but contestable and even changeable. The quest for more positive articulations occurs within representation, just as Fanon (1967) considers that a path to revolution in the colonies is through the re-deployment of the coloniser's language (see Cheyfitz, 1991).

The representation of Gomez for the majority of the sports journalists included here is starkly contrasted to fans or *ADN* readers. I turn next to consider how fans proliferate Gomez through their online gossip and website construction.

NOTES

[1] See Chapter 3 for Bennett and Woollacott's (1987) differentiation between intertexuality and intertexuality. Briefly, the former speaks to the idea that one text continually references or plays upon other texts, thus final meaning to a text is continually deferred; whereas the latter is more attentive to the socio-historical context of reading. I use both senses, hence inter(-)texuality.

[2] See http://www.nytimes.com. The search tag was actually "Scott Gomez + ice hockey" due to the existence of another Scott Gomez in professional baseball.

[3] Manny Malhotra, picked seventh overall in the Draft by the New York Rangers, is also included in Lapointe's (1998) musings on diversity and exoticness in the contemporary NHL. Malhotra hails from Toronto and Lapointe (1998) points out: "his father is from India and whose mother is a French-Canadian from Quebec" (p. 2).

[4] I retrieved this particular article from Tiffy's Scott Gomez website. Thus page numbers (pp. 1-4) refer to letter sized paper print outs from this website. I note 19 articles from a manual search of the magazine, as there is no online search facility for this information.

[5] "The Firm" is a nickname given to the NJ organization by veterans in the early 1990s.

[6] See the *ADN* website (http://www.adn.com) within the Sports Mailbag Forum (http://152.52.16.166/sports/story/0,26637, 203689,00.html).

[7] All grammar, punctuation, spelling and so on, reflects its appearance within the *ADN*. I also use the original Arial font type in order to separate my commentary from the readers' letters.

[8] See my earlier discussion of Doyle Woody's ((Dec 5th, 1999) article in the *ADN*.

[9] The same NHL diversity taskforce that led the NJ Devils session reported in *SI* (see above, p.?)

[10] Including the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, together with the Illegal Immigration Act and Immigrant Responsibility Act. These acts are still in effect, despite Proposition 187 largely being repealed.

CHAPTER 5 : "DOING" SCOTT: SPORT FANS AND TEXTUAL POACHER NETZINES

> [F]ans raid mass culture, claiming its materials for their own use, reworking them as the basis for their own cultural creations and social interactions .... Fan culture stands as an open challenge to the "naturalness" and desirability of dominant cultural hierarchies, a refusal of authorial authority and a violation of intellectual property. (Jenkins, 1992, p. 18)

> "Cybersport" involves online computing, with interactive multi-media capabilities that transcend the arguably more passive audience experience with traditional media. (McDaniel and Sullivan, 1998, p. 266)

My discussion around the online fans of Scott Gomez is indebted to Jenkins' (1992) understanding of media fans. Jenkins (1992) considers fans through de Certeau's (1984) idea of textual poachers. Similar to de Certeau's (1984) productive readers of text, Jenkins (1992) configures fans as textual poachers who tactically rework and remake mass media representations. Unlike de Certeau's (1984) nomadic readers and textual poachers of text who transiently mark their actions, Jenkins (1992) argues that fans leave material traces of their culture through producing their own artefacts, social interactions and communities. The fan cultural artefacts included in this chapter are two websites devoted to talking about the hockey player, Scott Gomez. As outlined in Chapter 2, Jenkins' (1992) examination of TV fans as textual poachers only gives sports fans a cursory glance, and does not thoroughly consider the possibilities of netzines.[1] Hence, in looking at Gomez fan netzines my work is an extension to Jenkins' thesis.

Both fan netzines draw on traditional mass media as a source of Gomez information and contain a variety of gossip, images, hypertext links, narratives, sound files, autographed memorabilia, statistics and so on. The fan netzines are inter(-)textually read with the media narratives outlined in Chapter 4 through both a politics and poetics of representation. As indicated by the quotation above, McDaniel and Sullivan (1998) maintain that the Internet provides sport fans with more interactive possibilities than the traditional media. Arguably, this interactive possibility enables Gomez's *cybersport* fans to interrelate within a supportive global network that connects disparate places and peoples to one another, forming what Mitra (1996) terms a "virtual community".[2] I read Mitra's considerations alongside Jenkins' (1992) idea of fandom as an "interpretative community".

I compare and contrast Scott's official site to an unofficial site in order to address continuities and discontinuities between them. Each site identifies with and hails Gomez in different ways. For example, one declares its legal authority to speak for Gomez, whereas the other does not. In addition, one hails him as an Alaskan hockey player, yet the other considers him through a number of fan postings, as an "awesome player" and "hotty". Thus, it could be posited that Gomez has both "official" and "unofficial" fans that tactically "use" or "do" Gomez in a myriad of ways by articulating him and themselves to different discourses.

5.1 - http: //www.scottygomez.com – The Official Scott Gomez Fan Club[3]

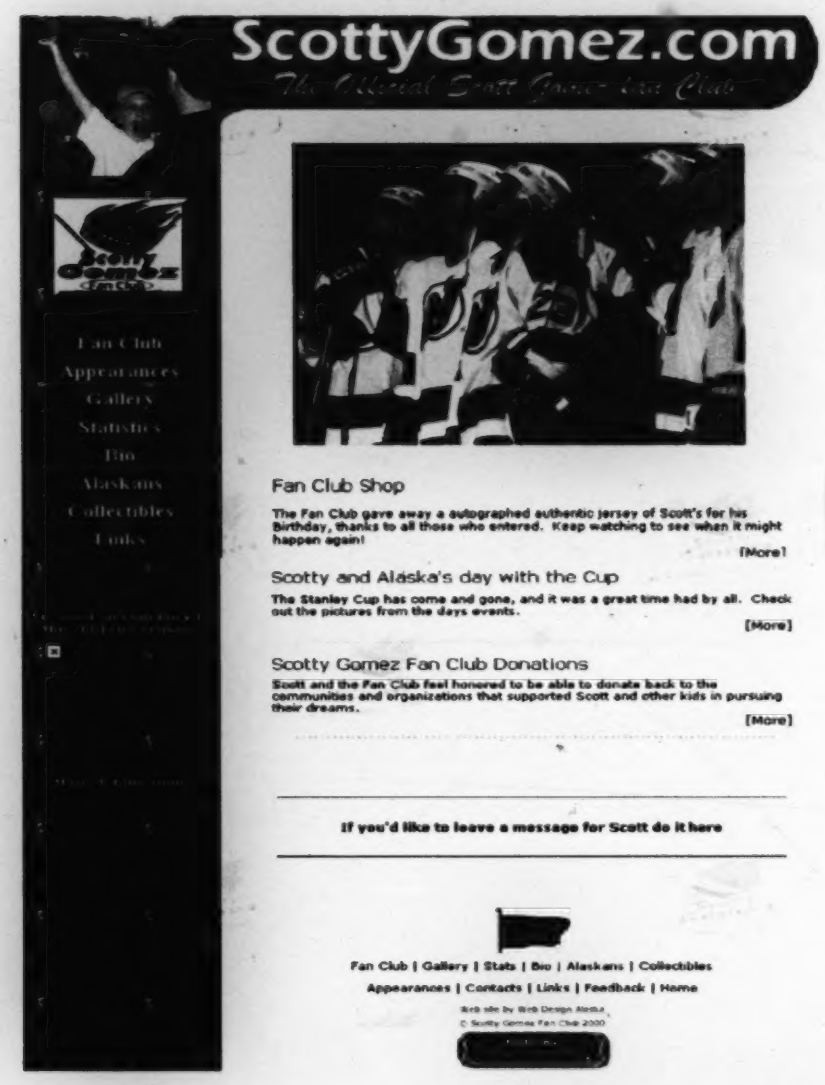
Gomez's so-called official site changes its information mostly in accordance to NJ Devils' games. Rather than just keeping the Devils' game time, the site also professes to maintain "Alaskan time". This site is authored by a professional web marketing firm called Web Design Alaska[4] (and is hosted by DigitalRage), but it is managed by the Scott Gomez ("official") fan club in Anchorage, Alaska (© Scotty Gomez Fan Club 2000). Speculatively, the official fan club is also run by some or all of the designers of this website. The last line of every page within this website indicates professional authorship and a copyright tag (©) for the Scotty Gomez Fan Club 2000. The quality of photographs, logos and layout further indicate professional authorship. The text, images, and hypertext links are updated every few months. Navigation through the site is enabled by the hypertext links on the front page. The hypertext links are: Fan Club, Appearances, Message Board, Gallery, Statistics, Bio, Alaskans, Collectibles, Links, and Contacts. I turn now to navigate the site through the hypertext links.[5]

5.12 – Official Scott Hypertext Links

As detailed in Chapter 2, hypertext links enable navigation not only within an individual website pages, but between multiple sites on the Internet. Shields (2000) forwards that hypertext links permit an almost infinite amount of intertextual connections within Cyberspace. Yet, this infinity is also limited as hypertext links prescribe surfers' movements through the Internet. For example, hypertext links within a website usually appear on the left hand side and on the bottom of the page and are specifically ordered.

The Scott Gomez Fan Club site is no different in this regard. Arguably, the order of hypertext links compels user movement. Adhering to this movement, I start with a consideration of the "Official Scotty Gomez Fan Club's" front or home page (depicted below).

Figure 5.1 – Official Scott Gomez Fan Netzine


ScottyGomez.com
Fan Club
Appearances
Gallery
Statistics
Bio
Alaskans
Collectibles
Links
Fan Club Shop
The Fan Club gave away a autographed authentic jersey of Scott's for his Birthday, thanks to all those who entered. Keep watching to see when it might happen again!
[More]
Scotty and Alaska's day with the Cup
The Stanley Cup has come and gone, and it was a great time had by all. Check out the pictures from the days events.
[More]
Scotty Gomez Fan Club Donations
Scott and the Fan Club feel honored to be able to donate back to the communities and organizations that supported Scott and other kids in pursuing their dreams.
[More]
If you'd like to leave a message for Scott do it here
Fan Club | Gallery | Stats | Bio | Alaskans | Collectibles
Appearances | Contacts | Links | Feedback | Home

Source: http://www.scottygomez.com

[redacted]: The main picture of Scott Gomez changes every few minutes (see Figure 5.1, p.122). The pictures range from actions shots of Scott playing for the NJ Devils to various Gomez family photographs. The top left picture changes every two seconds and depicts a number of different people (fans, friends, family and Scott) holding the Stanley Cup. Some of the photographs appear professionally taken, yet some also seem of the snap shot variety. This latter point indicates that this site does not necessarily only utilise mass media resources. There is a line of scrolling text across the top of the page, just above the main photograph, which is a current update of NJ Devils' games and Scott's appearances. A flaming puck logo lies on top of a white background. All in all, the whole front page quite busy with a number of colours.

As previously indicated, the site's main title is: "ScottyGomez.com" and has the subtitle: "The Official Scott Gomez Fan Club". The front page, like the rest of the pages, continually refers to Scott Gomez in a familiar way, especially as "Scotty". The front page introduces the rest of the site with ten[6] hypertext links on the left, which are repeated at the bottom of the page. The rest of the content contains topical stories of Gomez – including: the opening of Scott's new shop in Anchorage, the Stanley Cup [redacted] Alaska, Fan Club membership and donations, together with a number of links to video files. At the end of page, a hypertext link enables users to leave a message for Scott and an animation of an Alaskan flag flapping in the wind is on display.

[redacted]: The layout of this page is different from the front-page. There is a black background and a title logo that depicts blue sky with gold stars (representative of the Alaskan flag), mountains, and a cameo-like portrait of Gomez with a hockey helmet on in the top left hand corner. The left hand side of the page also has a number of hypertext links, connecting this page to the rest of the web site. The hypertext links within the title logo include: home, welcome (both links return users to the front page, detailed above), fan club, latest news (connecting to a sports news website detailing latest NJ headlines),[7] gallery, stats, bio, Alaskans, collectibles and links. The bottom of the page depicts a close up picture of the Stanley Cup and authorship is given as Web Design Alaska. This page exhibits a number of autographed photos of Scott and details about membership.

Membership cost is $40.00 (US), with a $5.00 shipping fee inside the US and $7.00 for international shipping. Membership fee lasts for one year only (starting from 9th January) and includes up to date emails about Scott, 10% discount on website or shop merchandise and unlimited access to the Message Board (which is still under construction). The page details that "The Official Scotty Gomez Fan Club Members will receive" four exclusive Scott collectibles. Scotty merchandise includes: a signed photograph, a fan club t-shirt that includes the text "Scotty Gomez Fan Club", the title "Alaska's Own" and two images of Gomez in his hockey uniform (home and away NJ Devils colours), an autographed fan club hockey puck, and a card of fan club authenticity signed by Scott's dad Carlos. Gomez's autograph and most of the merchandise also often appears with his hockey shirt number (23).

The page details another type of membership, Internet membership that allows access to the message board, but this board is currently not available and was not available for my period of research. The bottom of the page claims that the fan club donates "a portion of proceeds from membership fees to various Alaskan youth organizations", which it details through another hypertext link. According to this site, Scott's fan club have made donations to a number of organisations including: the Children's Network, Alaska's American Heart Association and sponsorship of various hockey teams, for example, Anchorage Northstars Peewee A's.

[redacted]: This page details Scott's forthcoming appearances. The layout to this page is similar to the Fan Club page through sharing the same title strip and Stanley cup logo at the bottom, but the background rather than being black is white with the flaming puck logo, like the front page. Differently to both the Fan Club and front page, no authorship is given at the bottom of this page.

[redacted]: As detailed above, this facility was under construction for my period of research. This link has also subsequently disappeared from the website.

[redacted]: The black background layout, title strip, Stanley Cup photo, and authorship match the Fan Club page. The gallery has a grid that contains a number of hypertext

links, comprising "exclusive" video clips and photographs (including those of Scott in the NHL, as a young player and various pictures of the Stanley Cup). Moving across the page with the mouse reveals a still picture of link, which when printed out merely exists as titles revealing the nature of each link, from "Kid Pics" to "NHLPA videos". One of the links, "Off the Ice", reveals 18 off-ice photographs of Gomez, from studio shots in a NJ uniform to pictures at his High School Graduation Ball. The site even contains a collage that was presumably designed by Scott as a kid. Each scanned picture can be enlarged and viewed singularly by clicking on the image.
The images and photographs contained within this site suggest the official fan club has poached Scott information not just from the media but from his family and friends too.

STATISTICS: The white background, title strip and Stanley Cup photo matches the Appearances page; the background, rather than containing flaming pucks, consists of the text "The Official Scott Gomez Fan Club Stats" (in red, blue and black) and authorship is given as "Web Disgn [*sic*] Alaska". Scott's career statistics are detailed, together with logo links to various online hockey team sites and highlight boxes. It also details the teams Scott has played for: Tri-City Americans (WHL Major Junior), USA World Junior, South Surrey Eagles (BCHL Junior A) and East High Thunderbirds (Alaska Scholastic Activities). The New Jersey Devils stats include his playoff and regular season points. The highlight box alongside Gomez's NJ statistics include: Stanley Cup champion, led rookies in points, assists, shots, and PIM, Calder Trophy winner, first Hispanic in the NHL and All-star team participant.

BIO: The black background layout, title strip and Stanley Cup photo match the Fan Club page; although, authorship of this particular page is given as "AK's Wright Design". Scott is quoted about being an NHL rookie on the top left of the page:

> It was a neat feeling walking into an NHL locker room and seeing your name over a stall. And it was great getting dressed in Devils colors. I was nervous at first and I still don't know what to expect. The veterans … I mean, you watch these guys on TV. It's fun skating with them. Just being here is awesome. Hopefully, one day I can be a vet.

The top right hand side of the page includes changing pictures of Scott as a child. In addition the left hand side hyperlinks detail: more stories and further images of Scott, his family, past teams (the statistics page, detailed above), together with a story (courtesy of NHLPA.com) about the Gomez's family house in Anchorage and a connection to the Latino Legends in Sports website. Further personal information is revealed through clicking on the "Family" hypertext link. Clicking on any of the immediate family members (Dalia and Carlos, Scott's mother and father, and Scott's sisters, Monica and Natalie) further reveal tables detailing favourite food, music and so on, together with a direct email option for surfers. This page contains a video clip of an interview with Dalia and Carlos Gomez, which can be down-loaded provided the fan has "RealPlayer", a software program that allows Internet browsers to view video clips. This page even contains a link to enable users to download RealPlayer, with the more recent and proficient version only being available at a cost. A number of other commercial links, advertising web products, including Netscape and Lycos Sport Scores, are also included on this page. One of the other external hypertext links connects this page to "The Latino Legends in Sport" website, which describes itself as a sports newsletter for Latinos, and contains a number of articles detailing Gomez career successes to date.[8]

The tables which make up the bulk of this "Bio" page include a number of personal details about Gomez detailed by the following headings: "About Scotty", "Gear", "Favorites" and "NHL Firsts". The information includes Scott's age, birthplace, road roommate, make of hockey gear worn (from Mission shoulder pad to Easton Air gloves), favourite movie (Robin Hood) and the date of his first NHL goal and hat trick.

Alaska.org: The white background layout with flaming puck logo, title strip and Stanley Cup photo matches the Appearances page. Authorship of this particular page is given as "AK's Wright Design". The main title for this site is "Alaska: Where Scotty Calls Home". The Alaskan flag waving in the wind appears on the top right hand side and the parallel left side depicts an outline of a fish. The first paragraph highlights that:

> Less than a year ago, if you would have asked someone outside of Alaska if they've every heard of Scott Gomez, they'd thought you were talking about the new second baseman for the Mariners. However, as Scotty has

had an outstanding rookie season, it's not just Alaskans talking about this kid anymore.

The next paragraph details that Gomez is "one of over 50 Alaskans" playing professional hockey. The third paragraph explains that Alaska has no professional home team and argues that: "Scotty breaking into the NHL, for the first time, Alaskans have the same team to cheer for". The last two paragraphs speak to the future prospect of Scotty-Gomez.com bringing together a scoreboard of all Alaskan players playing at "Pro, College, and Junior levels" together with information on "what's going on in the Alaskan hockey community".

The hypertext links on the left of the page include appearances, Alaskan hockey links, fan club and shop, together with Scott's teams, and the NHLPA story about the Gomez family home in Anchorage (which are all accessible through the other main pages). The last section of text on the left hand side further details the weather forecast in Anchorage.[9]

Collectibles: The layout of this page is similar to the Fan Club page, in that it has a black background, mountain title strip and Stanley Cup; authorship is given as "Web Disgn [*sic*] Alaska". Instead of hypertext links on the left hand side there are a series of flames radiating from the left. This page advertises a shop that only sells Scott memorabilia that is operated by his family and located within the Anchorage University campus. A number of collectibles are also available online through this website. The page concludes with a hypertext link for http://www.gator.com – a database engine that allows Internet users to compare prices of selected goods across the Internet.

Links: The white background layout with flaming puck logo, title strip and Stanley Cup photo matches the Alaskans page. Authorship of this particular page is given as "Web Disgn [sic] Alaska". This page details two sets of links: Alaska and Hockey. The Alaska links include a number of hockey teams, Tesoro Sport Centre, "University Center Shopping Mall", Big Dipper Ice Arena and so on. The Hockey links include connections to all NHL teams and League information (including AHL, ECHL etc.), together with links to

other Gomez fan sites, including, Kelly and Julie's site, Andrea's site, Maria's Friends' site and so on.

[redacted]: The layout and background to this page is identical to the Links page. This page contains four main hypertext links. Three of these links enable Microsoft Outlook to open in order to send emails to the: fan club (fanclub@scottygomez.com), the webmaster (webmaster@scottygomez.com), and for prospective advertisers (ad@scottygomez.com). The last link, which has cameo portrait of Scott as a child above it, connects fans to the Message Board. The Message Board, as detailed previously, was under construction for my period of research. In following through with my representational analysis, I have drawn two themes from this website.

5.13 – Authorised Scott

This site describes itself as the authorised site of/for Scott Gomez. Seemingly, the site represents and speaks on behalf of Gomez and his family. This is indicated through the site providing email access to both the Gomez family and Scott. As described above, plausibly, many of the Gomez images are also from his family and friends. Thus, the "official" poaching is not just the re-working and borrowing of mass media materials. Official status is also denoted by the professional web authorship. The site's professional status is further revealed by the fact that since its inception in 2000 it has become an increasingly commercial and commodified affair. For example, firstly the site includes a number of advertisements for web services. Secondly, the site sells a number of Gomez collectibles and memorabilia.

Gomez's autograph is a particularly coveted item, appearing on most of the fan club introductory membership products. Alm (1997), in addressing the current mass-market for buying and selling autographs, quotes a manager of a Baseball Card Superstore: "'[p]eople want to buy something they know the athlete has touched. It is far more personal. More people are getting into it. This market will definitely increase'"(p. 1). Owing Gomez's autograph is thus presumably a way for fans to "get into" Gomez. In addition, ownership operates as a badge that informs other fans of your devotion. Not all of Gomez' fans will necessarily succumb and pay the fees to be a member of the official fan

club. Yet, admittance to the official fan club, hence official fan status, requires payment of the annual fee.

5.14 - Made in Alaska©

Through keeping Alaskan time and stressing other Alaskan links, this site overtly attempts to place and claim Gomez for Alaska. For example the Fan Club Page contains a Scott Gomez shirt that reads "Alaskan's own" and the Alaskans' Page title reads: "Alaska: Where Scotty Calls Home". Although within the Alaskans Page, Gomez's wider popularity is also alluded to by the comment about Gomez's: "outstanding rookie season, [which means that] it's *not just Alaskans talking about this kid anymore*" (emphasis added). On the front page of the website one of the paragraphs reads: "Scott and the Fan Club feel honoured to be able to donate back to the communities and organizations that supported Scott and other kids in pursuing their dreams". Following the "[More]" hypertext link that appears with this paragraph reveals that Gomez's "community" is Alaska. Alaskan images are also used to promote the Alaskaness of the site. For example, as described within the hypertext links the Alaskan flag and colours therein are employed throughout the site. In addition, fishing and snowy mountain images are continually used.

Overwhelmingly then, Gomez is hailed as an Alaskan-American within this website. Few references to Gomez's other heritages (that is, Columbian-Mexican) are detailed. This offers a contrast to some of the Gomez media narratives detailed in Chapter 4. For example, the *NYT* continually address of Gomez as a "Hispanic star" and "pioneer", which differently neglect the fact he is *also* an Alaskan and American. In contrast, this site is comparable to the *ADN*. Unlike Woody's (1999) *ADN* article however, this website never claims Gomez as the first Alaskan, or even more appropriately the first Alaskan born player to make and maintain a regular season position for a NHL team. This is not to say being Alaskan precludes someone from being Chicano, but the representation of Gomez within this site and his phenomenal success as a hockey player, is continually premised to Alaska and a unitary notion of Alaskaness. For example, the front page contains a hypertext link called "Alaskans". Following this link reveals a page called "Alaska Links". Within this page is a set of links mainly to hockey clubs and organisations based in Alaska.

Gomez's Chicano status is briefly mentioned within the official site. For example, the hypertext link to the Latino Sports Legends Website, a reference within the "Highlight table" on Scott's Stat page as the "First Hispanic in the NHL", and details of Gomez's parental heritages are included within hyperlinks from the family link via the Bio page. Within the overall images and narratives employed by this site, and echoing Woody's (1999) article in the *ADN*, the few references that do indicate Gomez's Chicano status, are inconsequentially positioned.

Echoing the representational strategies of some of the media narratives in Chapter 4, this site suggests Gomez can only be constructed as someone who is Alaskan, not Latino, rather than someone who is *both* Latino *and* Alaskan. This polarised and strategic construction of Gomez re-affirms Hall's (1997c) suggestion that representation seeks to push and pull people in specific ways, especially with reference to difference, that excludes a number of entities that seemingly do not belong. This website positively hails Gomez as an Alaskan, thus giving admittance to the American community; but, by doing so, his Colombian and Mexican heritages are largely effaced.

Following Dyer's (1993) reworking of Klapp's (1962) distinctions between stereotypes versus social-types, Gomez is socially-typed within this site as an Alaskan, and thus someone who positively belongs within the boundaries of the Alaskan community. Scott's admittance as an Alaskan is also articulated to his successful debut as a NHL hockey player. Whereas Gomez's mediated construction as a Hispanic star, as demonstrated within the *NYT*, operates through a number of reductive stereotypes that place him as an over-sexed migrant worker who possesses "natural instincts", and thus someone who clearly does not belong.

The introduction to such Alaskan locality within this website also interrupts the idea that the Internet is completely context-less or place-less (see Chapter 2). Time and time again this site wants to place its construction in Alaska and its authors as Alaskan. This is not to deny that the site's Alaskaness is not exceeded by its availability on the Internet that theoretically entails its consumption all over the world. The latter point indicates that surfers still receive the Internet, like any other communication medium, through different contexts that accents their consumption. Lastly, as Gomez was born in Anchorage, Alaska, the continual references to Alaska, together with access to the family,

provide the authors with the credentials and authority to speak for Gomez. Hence, the question of power/representation, especially with regards to who is and who is not authorised or admitted, what is included and what is not, remains salient issues for reading websites. I turn to consider an "other" unofficial website devoted to discussing Scott.

5.2 - Unofficial Scott: Kelly and Julie's Website

The starting page is a key ring cartoon-like figure of a NJ player, (see below) on a black background with different sized white stars, and Scott Gomez's name appears in red within the top left hand corner of this picture. Unfortunately, given that this site is devoted to a non-white hockey player, this figure looks like a monkey. I have witnessed at men's professional hockey games in England, fans on several occasions taunting black players with the phrase: "get the monkey off the ice". Employing the image of a monkey to represent metaphorically a person of colour has racist implications generally, and more specifically with reference to ice hockey, implies Gomez should not be on the ice.

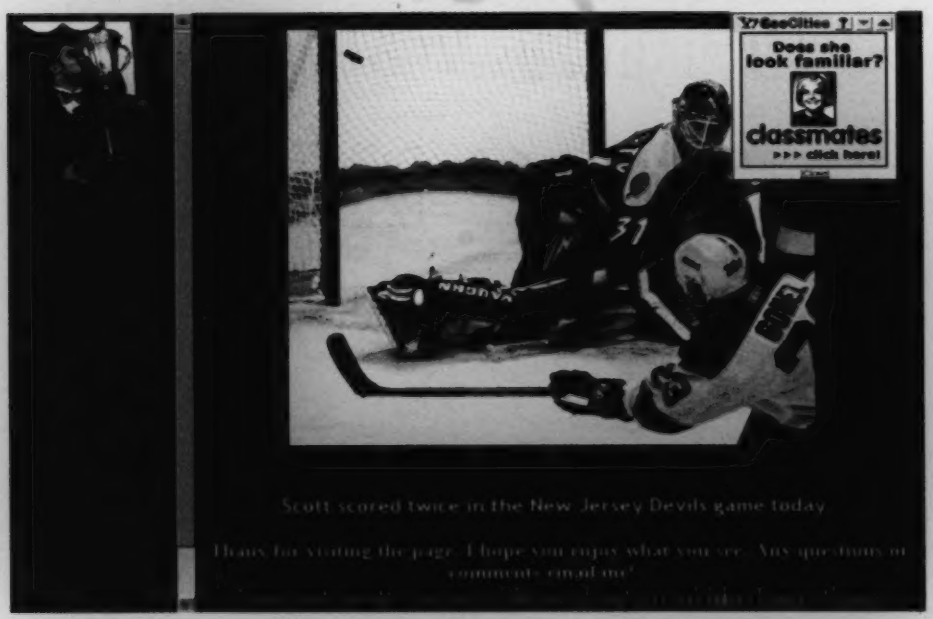
Figure 5.2: Unofficial Scott – Kelly and Julie's Fan Netzine's Home Page

Source - http://www.geocities.com/scott_gomez/

As revealed by the address and the advertisement on the top right of the front page (see Figure 5.2, p. 131), the website is hosted by Yahoo's GeoCities. GeoCites is a software company that provides free web site hosting for individual users. This service entails that Yahoo/ GeoCites advertisements appear on every page. GeoCites like other multi-user systems are framed within a particular architecture. Graham (1999) argues that the metaphor of architecture is apt, as those who enter GeoCities find themselves within "houses" that are within "neighbourhoods", which are within "cities". Cities are supposed to link together like-minded folks. Thus, Kelly and Julie's site is actually part of a Geo-Cities' network of similar Gomez fan sites. For example, Andrea's, Liz Scott's and Tiffy's Scott websites are all part of the GeoCities network.[10] As I indicated above, the first page of this site contains a monkey-like image, together with a GeoCities advertisement. Below such images is a line of text inviting the surfer to "click to enter"...

5.21 - Kelly and Julie's Scott Fan Netzine: Click to Enter...

Figure 5.3: Unofficial Scott – Kelly and Julie's Fan Netzine's Index Page



Source - http://www.geocities.com/scott_gomez/

Rather than follow every hypertext link on this site as I did with the official site, firstly I comment generally on the content of the pages attached to/from the links in order to compare and contrast with the official Gomez site.[11] Secondly, I focus on the pages that detail the Guest Book comments, which both extends my discussion of *cybersport* fans and offers a contrast to the information currently available on the official site.

In clicking and entering the site, the index page contains a professional-looking media photograph of Gomez scoring a goal in a NJ game, an indication when the site was last updated and a disclaimer that reads: "I am not Scott Gomez! Please don't email like I am? thanks! [*sic*]" (see Figure 5.3, p. 132). This contrasts Kelly and Julie's site to the official one, which continually reminds its audience that it represents Scott and his family. Other unofficial sites similarly employ this tactic. For example, Tiffy's site (dis-)claims: "This site is not affiliated with Scotty Gomez, the New Jersey Devils or the NHL in any way. Another Note: I am not Scott Gomez!!! I am just a fan of his who decided to make a web page for him!".[12]

The lining up of photographs and text on the starting and home page for this website indicate that the site is not as slickly executed as the official site. For example, the key ring NJ player image on the start page sits quite awkwardly at the top left hand side of the page, as does the photograph on the home page. The whole site is not updated as frequently as the official website, which means the same information is often on display. Authorship and copyright tags are also not attached to every page and Kelly and Julie,

Similar to the official site, the hypertext links to the rest of the site appear on the left hand side and include: Home, Bio, Stats, South Surrey Eagles, Tri City Americans, NJ Devils, Multimedia, Links, Sign the Guestbook and View the Guestbook. All pages appear on a plain black background and contain a number of different sized and type of fonts. Each page contains far fewer images and changes in colour than the official website. Although such style differences may betray a non-professional authorship, I find this site, due to its relative plainness more reader friendly than the official website.

The Bio page, in conjunction with the teams played for pages (South Surrey Eagles, Tri City Americans and NJ Devils), contains identical statistics to the official site. Although Kelly and Julie's site does not have the same detail or include some of the other non-Professional clubs for which Scott has played (for example, USA World Junior

Team or East High Thunderbirds), as compared to the official site. Kelly and Julie's site does however contain different information. For example, the Bio page includes a "Central Scouting Report" of Gomez that comments: "a deceptive skater who reaches top speed very quickly .... he has very good vision and strong instincts .... He is very competitive offensively, although not overtly aggressive". The use of strong instincts here echoes Lou Lamoriello's description of Gomez possessing "'natural instincts'" (Lapointe, 1998, p. 2). Again, the use of "natural" in describing Gomez gives support to the commentaries of Hoose (1989) and Breton (2000) on some of the stereotypical representational strategies employed by the media to describe Latino baseball players.

This site, more so than the official one, includes source information for some of the photographs and narratives. For example, citations included are the NHLPA website and thanks are extended to the *Peach Arch News* and the *Surrey Now* for some of the pictures. Yet, on a number of pages (see for example the South Surrey Eagles and NJ pages), fellow fans are implored not to poach some images. For example, the South Surrey Eagles page has the following request prior to a number of pictures: "[m]ost of these pictures I have scanned myself and i know there is no way that anyone else can have these pictures. So don't take them, Please. Thank you" (with original grammatical expression). Thus, despite this site employing the poaching practice of taking images and narratives from a number of websites and mass media sources, the fan authors do not want their site raided in a similar fashion.

Some items poached from other websites also reveal their source, even if the authors do not explicitly highlight it. For example, sound and video files from *SI* online always contain at the end of play, an advertisement for the site. Kelly and Julie's site does actually include a number of sound files taken from a Gomez interview conducted by Mark Morgan with *SI* online (see the Multimedia page).[13] One poached sound file details Scott's musings on being a role model: "[l]ike it or not, we're role models. Yeah, a little kid sees me, mmmm an Hispanic kid sees me, and says he wants to be like the next Scott Gomez, more power to him". This quote has similarities to Woody's (1999b) *ADN* article that quotes Gomez: "'[i]t's special but it's all about younger kids. If a young kid sees me and wants to be Gomez, that's great'" (p. 7). Yet, Gomez in the *SI* sound file specifically relates his positioning as a role model for male "Hispanic" kids. Kelly and Julie

also poach a Claude Lemieux (a team mate of Gomez at the time) quote from the same online *SI* page, but, leave two other sound files: one with the title: *"Gomez says race never was an issue while growing up in Alaska"* and another titled: *"Randy McKay says the Devils don't care about Gomez's heritage"*. The sound files are part of a larger online article on Gomez titled: *"El fuego: Devils' Gomez is one hot rookie"* by Mark Morgan (2000). Thus, fan poaching although tactically reworking through juxtaposing and supplementing mass media stories and images, also remains a selective practice where media representation is rephrased by the exclusion of certain information.

Throughout this site, the web authors identify with Gomez through his skills as a hockey player. For example, quite tellingly within the Devils' page, Kelly and Julie describe Scott firstly under the title, "What he did", as leading the Devils in scoring for most of the regular season and joining Petr Buzek as the 1st NHL rookies to play in the NHL All-Star game. Under this paragraph is the title "Other facts" which include detailing Scott as the "1st Hispanic player in the NHL" and the "1st Alaskan player to play in the NHL". Thus, Gomez's ethnicities seem of little interest to the fan authors of this website. This not only contrasts this site to the official site, but to the wider media narratives too. This non-interest is further apparent within the Guest Book postings, which I turn to examine now.

5.22 - Kelly and Julie's Gomez Guest Book: Unofficial Scott and Puckbunny Lust

The Guest Book page is not a virtual chat room allowing live online gossip rather it is a static posting board that permits some interaction. For example, many of the postings indicate the email addresses and homepage URLs for the posters. For the timeline of my research (June 1998 - July 2000), there are 57 postings.[14] I include a sample of these postings below. I have actually signed this GuestBook, sending my message so only the web authors can view it; yet, I have only ever received an automated response, thanking me for my interest in the site.[15]

Many of the postings on the site, including those below, indicate that not only do fans appreciate the site for the information it contains about Gomez, but also acknowledge the creative efforts of Julie and Kelly's web design:

1st Post, Saturday March 18, 2000 (8:49:30pm)[16]
Kim from Surrey

> This page is great! I watched a few eagles games when Scott played... he was awesome then and still is... Hopefully he'll win the Calder trophy... Keep up the good work Scottie.
>
> PS. We miss you in Surrey! :)

Posted Thursday March 30, 2000 (10:57:22pm)
Terri from Austin, TX

> Awesome site! I wish they showed more Devils games in Austin. Scott is an awesome player. I read an article about him Sports Illustrated about him and he seems so normal. Just a kid who misses his mom. Looks like he's up for Rookie of the Year and he'll probably win it. The Stars have Brenden Morrow (another great-looking rookie) so I'm not TOO jealous of y'all. :o) Great pictures. Especially the one of Scott dancing without a shirt on. Sorry about the puckbunny moment. Keep up the great work!

Posted Friday March 17, 2000 (11:32:46pm)
Peter H. from Alaska

> This page is a hell of a lot better than your old one! Scott Gomez is the best!

Posted Wednesday March 22, 2000 (11:56:58pm)
Jodie from NJ

> Your site rocks!! I love the graphics!! GOMER FOR CALDER!!

Posted Thursday June 15, 2000 (8:48:25pm)
Kailey, Omaha, NE

> I LOVE Scott Gomez. Even though I am a Dallas Stars fan....Gomez is a very talented player. This is a great site- keep up the good work!

Posted Saturday June 17, 2000 (5:28:24am)
Mia, Finland

> Hey! A great site about the best player in the NHL! Great pics... Keep it up!

Posted Thursday November 5, 2000 (0:08:18am)
Dave Lieberman, New Jersey

> Hey – nice Scott Gomez site. He's a great hockey player and he kicked ass in the playoffs, too.

Terri's posting indicates that fans read across different representations of Gomez. Although Terri's engagement with *SI* is hardly comparable to the critical media evaluations conducted by Jenkins' (1992) TV fans. However many of the other postings illus-

trate the fans critically appraising the netzine. For example Peter H says: "[t]his page is a hell of a lot better than your old one!". Others, like Kailey and Dave offer quite complimentary praise. The commentary on how Gomez "is the best", "great looking" and so on, however, somewhat overshadows the appreciation for design of the site. Terri's "puck-bunny" musings on Scott Gomez and Brendan Morrow, together with Kailey's appreciation also indicate that fans receive pleasure from identifying with a number of "awesome" and "talented" players from different teams, rather than necessarily having a one-team loyalty. Analogous to Jenkins' (1992) media fans that interact with one another and read inter(-)texually across TV programs, these online Gomez fans read across teams, juxtaposing certain players. Although, loyalty to just the NJ Devils is also apparent:

Posted Tuesday June 13, 2000 (5:45:33pm)
Tanya, NJ

> NJ DEVILS RULE BABY!! And I love scott Gomez..what a hockey player ....haha.. we even named our Ferret after him.. cute huh... I love the devils!!! STANLEY CUP CHAMPIONS baby!!!!

Monday April 24, 2000 (4:1:04pm)
Gossip Queen, Anchorage, Alaska

> SCOTT GOMEZ IS DA BOMB! DEVS RULE AND RANGERS SUCK BIG-TIME!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! SCOTT RULES AND DON'T LET ANYONE MAKE U BELIEVE DIFFERENT. –KRISTEN

Tuesday April 18, 2000 (10:42:22pm)
Hannah, New York

> Luv the site! I am totally obsessed with Scott Gomez. I know everyone must say that and I know it sounds lame but I am seriously obsessed with him. HE IS HOT! I love the pics of Scott dancing without a shirt. I printed out 10 copies of it. I have no life whatsoever but the Devils. Ain't afraid to admit it!!! GO DEVILS GO.

The above sentiments indicate commitment to the NJ Devils, but this investment is also further narrowed onto Gomez, whom Hannah considers to be "hot", Gossip Queen thinks is "da bomb" and Tanya labels him as "cute". Hannah, through declaring her obsession with Gomez, further claims that her life is the "Devils". Other fan postings reveal commitment and loyalty just to Scott:

Posted Tuesday April 25, 2000 (3:57:20pm)
Sweeto, NY

> Yo, Scott Gomez rules! I love how he is always so happy and always smiling. You rule Scotty!!!!!! – Sweeto

Tuesday May 30, 2000 (3:24:34pm)
Lynn Cormier, unknown location

> Hi love u Gomez

Sunday June 11, 2000 (3:10:54pm)
Sara, Ontario, Canada

> Ok, well I'm just going to be VERY forward, and say, SCOTT GOMEZ IS HOT!!! But that's not the only reason I love him! He's also a GREAT player.

Sunday July 7, 2000 (4:07:32am)
Summer, unknown location

> THANKS 4 ALL OF THE GREAT PICS OF HOTTY GOMEZ!

Online fans note Scott's ability to play hockey, but more often than not, this compliment is attached with the assertion that he is sexually attractive, or to use the vernacular, a "hotty". A number of posters also personally address Gomez as if he reads the site or is involved with the site management. For example, Kim posts: "[k]eep up the good work Scotty. P.S. We miss you in Surrey! :)", and Lynn writes: "I love u Gomez". Kailey, Tanya, and Sara also profess their love for Gomez. Such postings illustrate that a number of fans identify with Gomez through sexual desirability. Given the common practice of Internet surfers adopting different identities (men posting as women and vice versa for example), I cannot argue that desire for Gomez is necessarily heterosexual (see Evard, 1996; Kendall, 1996; Warhol, 1999 for example). Rather than being a hindrance to discussing gender, Warhol (1999) argues that online bulletin boards productively allow the researcher to observe what gender a participant is performing without knowing the biological sex behind the gender utterances. The majority of posters to this site certainly want fellow surfers to think that they are women as they sign the board with women's names. One deduction that can be noted is that whereas the posters who sign as women claim their love and desire for Scott Gomez, the fans who sign as men are more tame and aloof in their appreciation. For example, Peter. H claims: "Scott Gomez is the best", and Dave says: "He's a great hockey player and he kicked ass in the playoffs, too". The post-

ings from people who sign as women are conceivably traceable onto a feminine narrative that over uses exclamation marks and contains emotional outbursts; whereas the postings from people who sign as men are traceable onto a masculine narrative that is more objective and rational. Such narratives suggest plenty of attraction to Gomez, yet the desires on display through the postings are mild compared to the fantasy identifications that Jenkins (1992) notes with TV fans.

I am not aware of an official definition of a puckbunny, but from playing and watching hockey for several years, I offer that puckbunnies are female hockey fans or groupies who either desire from afar or who actively seek sexual relations with male hockey players. Like the media fans Jenkins (1992) addresses, to outsiders the puckbunny tag is meant in derogatory manner. Though unlike the fans Jenkins (1992) mentions, I do not know whether the posters to this site are men or women. The wider public's understanding of a puckbunny, like fan more generally (Grossberg, 1992; Jenkins, 1992; and Jenson, 1992), is one of disapproval. Puckbunny disapproval is illustrated by Terri's apology: "[g]reat pictures. Especially the one of Scott dancing without a shirt on. Sorry about the puckbunny moment".

As detailed previously, I can only appreciate Gomez's fans through the names they sign in their postings, so the puckbunny moments on display through this site are not necessarily indicative of opposite sex attraction. Despite not knowing whether there is same-sex or different-sex attraction going on for these fans, sexual attraction is the main orientating points for the Gomez fans represented within the Guest Book postings. This identification is thus very different from the official site that wants to hail Gomez as a hockey prodigy from Alaska.

Arguably, the postings are instances of Gomez gossip. This gossip, as outlined above, revolves around Gomez as a lust interest. Jenkins (1992) argues that gossip is traditionally considered the "idle chatter" of women. Feminist writers, as Jenkins (1992) outlines, have however re-considered gossip as a meaningful space that allows the communal sharing of secrets. The puckbunny posters on this site, in expressing their love for Gomez, do so through other personal vignettes. For example Kailey expresses love for Gomez, "[e]ven though I am a Dallas Stars fan"; Tanya informs us: "I love scott Gomez..what a hockey player....haha..we even named our Ferret after him"

Extrapolating from Warhol's (1999) arguments, gossip traditionally may well traditionally be a "feminine discourse", but this is not necessarily traceable onto women's bodies, as Jenkins (1992) seemingly suggests. Kelly and Julie's site beyond the Guest Book postings, with its overuse of exclamation marks and preponderance with off-ice full head-shot pictures of Gomez, could also considered as a "puckbunny moment". In comparison to Kelly and Julie's choice of photographs, the official site has far more on-ice and action shots of Gomez. In addition, the fact Kelly and Julie's site has a Guest Book that permits puckbunny postings also suggests they condone encourage this identification with Gomez.

That said, arguably sport talk in all its varieties, emanating from different bodies, is also a form of gossip or idle talk (Eco, 1986; Wenner, 1989). Corresponding to Jenkins' (1992) commentary on gossip providing TV fans with: "a shared set of references for discussing common experiences and feelings with others with whom one may never have enjoyed face-to-face contact" (p. 81), the online postings from the Gomez fans suggest a common culture. Hence, online Gomez fan gossip arguably provides some evidence for the idea of a virtual community. I discuss virtual communities below.

Posters also indicate quite a variety of Gomez fan locations, including: Anchorage, Austin, Texas, Finland and Ontario. This suggests that Gomez fandom is not just limited to Alaska or New Jersey. One notable absence from most of the postings, during my period of research, is the participation of posters from Spanish heritages. I am using the names to guide me here, so this is a speculative point. One exception to this rule is:

Friday April 08, 2000 (3:23:23pm)
David Gonzalez, Anchorage, Alaska

> I think it is absolutely great that so many people are enjoying Scott's ride.
> Scott is not just a great hockey player but a great person as well!

A further interesting point is the times of day listed for the postings. Most posts occur during the evening, for example: Kim posts on Saturday at 8:49pm, Terri on Thursday at 10:57pm; but, others post in the morning and afternoon, for example: Sweeto on Tuesday at 3:57pm and Dave on Thursday at 0:08am. These time listings suggest fans have surfed onto this website predominantly before and after school and typical work

days, somewhat literally reflecting Jenkins' (1992) assertions that fandom offers only a "weekend-only world" for people.[17] This point is elaborated on below within my discussion of virtual and interpretative communities.

5.3 - Reading Scott Inter(-)textually: Unofficial, Official and Mediated Representations

> If there is an art of "making do" as opposed to simply a vocabulary of tactics or a configuration of local practices, that art lies in transforming "borrowed materials" from mass culture into new texts. (Jenkins, 1992, p. 223).

De Certeau (1984) describes popular culture as a system for subverting "the system" and appropriating its symbols and making them function in another register. The bulk of Gomez information contained within these sites derives from mass media sources (including TV, radio, newspapers, magazines and the NHLPA website). Through poaching activities or tactical manoeuvres, both sites supplement and to some extent creatively rewrite the general media representations about Gomez. For Jenkins (1992), such practices indicate fans' scribbling in the margins of the mass media texts. One salient re-writing of Gomez is that while the *NYT* and *SI* hail Gomez as a Hispanic success story, the fan authors and fan posters hail Gomez officially as a successful Alaskan hockey player and unofficially as a "hotty". Rather than just offering temporary and transient tactics, approximating Jenkins (1992) TV fans who produce art, music and fanzines, Gomez's fans leave behind material traces of their re-makings in the form of fan netzines and the electronic postings therein.

Whereas Jenkins (1992) TV fans literally re-write their favourite shows by offering alternative scripts, the authors and posters of these fan netzines re-write Gomez's media representations primarily by investing their time and creative energies into providing trivia and gossip about him. This fan investment displays an intimate knowledge of Gomez, which goes far beyond any of the mass media narratives read in Chapter 4. The number of photographs, narratives and statistics detailed across both sites illustrate this attention. The Gallery page on the official site more specifically contains a number of videos, NHL, photos of Scott as a child and family photos. The Bio page on Kelly and

Julie's site contains a NHL central scouting report and various off-ice pictures of Gomez, including one of Gomez as a kid in a superman costume at a birthday party. The Multi-media page on Kelly and Julie's site also contains a number of sound files from SI online as well as a number of videos of Gomez scoring goals for the NJ Devils. Moreover, both sites claim to use a number of "exclusive" images of Gomez. Kelly and Julie use a number of scanned images from obscure Alaskan newspapers and the official site seems to have access to Gomez's family album.

Such intimate fannish focus to Gomez confirms Jenkins (1992) assertion that fans often articulate concerns that "go unvoiced within the dominant media" (p. 23). By using images and narratives from predominantly the mass media, together with the NHLPA, the NHL and conceivably family photograph albums, the fan authors creatively re-work such representations to their own re-presentation of Gomez. Arguably, just as Jenkins' (1992) TV fans often re-arrange plots in order to privilege secondary characters, Gomez's fans, through the very creation of these sites (and others like them), give him far more consistent attention than the wider mass media.

Jensen (1992) characterises the fan as a product of the celebrity and the star system. Though neither site explicitly labels Gomez as hero or celebrity, if the existence of fans implies celebrity, then the presence of the Gomez fan netzines indicate that Gomez has achieved celebrity or star status. Turner et al. (2000) further state that an interest in someone's private life is the prime indicator that someone had achieved celebrity status in the media. Conceivably, the existence of the various Gomez sites and the myriad of personal details contained therein extend his celebrity status beyond mass media representation. In conferring Gomez's celebrity status, arguably, fans confer their own fan status by creating sites, surfing and leaving postings on the Gomez websites.

I now turn to consider specifically how both fan netzines indicate different levels to Gomez fandom. Additionally I address Jenkins' (1992) and Mitra's (1996) arguments concerning interpretative fan and virtual communities.

5.31 - Officialdom Versus Fandom

> Fans often display a close attention to the particularity of television narratives that puts academic critics to shame. Within the realm of popular cul-

> ture, fans are the true experts; they constitute a competing educational elite, albeit one without official recognition or social power. (Jenkins, 1992, p. 86)

Kelly and Julie's site, like other unofficial fan sites, remind online fans that this site does not speak on behalf of Scott Gomez. Although these disclaimers are placed because of legal copyright issues, such pronouncements also have the effect of distinguishing the official site from other unofficial sites. In claiming this authority, the official site, similar to the mass media producers that Jenkins (1992) mentions, is in a prime position to regulate and control meanings articulated to Gomez. This control is also done through the power to claim the legal authority to speak on behalf of Gomez. This entails the repetitive construction of Gomez as a successful Alaskan hockey player across this site, enjoys "official" sanction. Rather than claiming to speak or represent Gomez, the unofficial sites, including Kelly and Julie's, tend to claim only their fan status.

Jenkins (1992) notes that whereas official fan organisations tend to generate membership through consumer purchases, fandom is the "unofficial fan community" (p. 279) where "fans may speak about their cultural preferences and assert their desires for alternative developments" (p. 279). Jenkins' (1992) distinction means that the official sites' desire to cash in on fans' identifications with Gomez precludes its consideration as an instance of "fandom". Rather than judging, which site is a more authentic instance of fandom, the existence of the official site merely points to a multiplicity of Internet fan production today. This is not to say that there is not a hierarchy of authority between these Gomez sites, rather, as I address below, both sites in different ways embrace aspects of dominant culture.

Authority is also demonstrated in other ways. Graham (1999) notes that: "[t]he quality of the web pages of commercial advertisers is noticeably greater than that of most small groups and individuals .... [and] .... difference in quality makes for difference in impact" (p. 79). Thus, arguably Gomez's official site, which contains flashier graphics and design competency, may in turn mean that it enjoys more surfers than the unofficial sites.[18] The computer competency the official site demonstrates it is also arguably part and parcel of the increased professionalism of fanzines more generally (noted by Jenkins, 1992).

Gomez's official site also enjoys more referencing from search engines. Greater referencing by search engines also implies design expertise by the web authors. For example, my initial Google search referred to this site first, and other official sites like the NJ Devils' website, yet, many of Gomez's unofficial sites were not included. Gomez's official site does however provide hypertext links to a number of the unofficial sites. Yet, this ability to grant access to the unofficial sites, again, infers that the official site again enjoys more strategic authority than other Gomez sites. The unofficial sites in turn frequently reference one another.

Jenkins (1992) actually dismisses sport fans due to their more acceptable *male*stream social status compared to the relative lowly status of the women media fans his study focuses on (see my discussion in Chapter 2). Yet, despite Jenkins' (1992) assumptions that all sports fans are men, the Gomez unofficial fan postings are seemingly from women and Kelly and Julie are the web designers. Despite being hockey fans, puckbunnies (who to my knowledge generally are women), like band groupies, are hardly held in high public esteem.

Beyond the Guest Book postings, Kelly and Julie's site with its overuse of exclamation marks and preponderance with off-ice full head-shot pictures of Gomez could also considered as a "puckbunny moment". Following my previous comments, this is traceable onto a feminine narrative. In addition, the fact Kelly and Julie's has a Guest Book that permits puckbunny postings, suggests they affirm such identification with Gomez. In comparison to Kelly and Julie's choice of photographs, the official site that has more action and on-ice shots of Gomez. Again, following Warhol's (1999) comments, such moments are traceable onto a masculine narrative. This commentary suggests then that official Gomez is written through a masculine narrative, whereas, unofficial Gomez is written through a feminine narrative.

Expertise within fan culture is, even if not externally validated, also popularly affirmed by fans. One area of "popular or tactical expertise" that fans excel in is, as Jenkins (1992) notes, knowing intimate details about the media text/s being worshipped. In this regard both fans excel in popularly establishing the "truth" about Gomez. The fan authors across both zines demonstrate a tremendous amount of knowledge about Gomez, including his: player statistics, date of birth, favourite food and the type of hockey shoul-

der pads he wears. Yet the official site actually has more tactical authority through its display of Gomez family snap shots. Jenkins (1992) calls such personal information trivia. Trivia is a source of "unauthorized and unpoliced knowledge existing outside academic institutions but a source of popular expertise for the fans" (Jenkins, 1992, p. 87).

Another way expertise for fans is indicated is through intimately referring to their objects of worship in the first person. First person narrative sets a personal, emotional and insider tone to the writing; whereas, print-media narratives (including some of those examined in Chapter 4) tend to employ strategically the third person, which makes for more detached and objective, thus seemingly more truthful or factual writing. This is not to say that some tabloid newspapers and sports magazines do not also adopt the first person when speaking to certain athletes, just that this website, like others devoted to Gomez, continually employ this tactic. Whereas first person narrative within fanzines works to legitimate the authors' output within the fan community, to a wider social audience it is viewed as illegitimate and scandalous (Jenkins, 1992).

In several ways then, the official site has the upper hand on Kelly and Julie's site. Popularly speaking the official site contains more personal information on Gomez. Professionally speaking the official site's design output is comparatively superior to Kelly and Julie's site. Yet, whereas the official site merely re-inscribes *ADN's* construction of Gomez as a talented Alaskan hockey player, Kelly and Julie's site expand the meaning of Gomez to affirm both his talent as [just] a hockey player and as an object of desire for a number of fans. Moreover, puckbunny lust, apparent within Kelly and Julie's site is traceable onto a feminine narrative, whereas the official Gomez site is traceable onto a masculine narrative. Although, both sites' focus to Gomez alone, suggesting affective closeness could also be considered traditionally feminine. This assertion contests the previous research on sport fans (noted in Chapter 2) that indicates fans as men who exhibit particular kinds of masculinity. Whereas, Jenkins (1992) stresses time and time again that TV fans are predominantly "women" my analysis suggests fandom, including sport fandom, is feminine, and perhaps "officially" masculine. Thus, legitimacy and authority has different connotations within, outside and between fandom. Translating the different fan productions onto fans themselves, conceivably Gomez has unofficial and official online fans.

5.32 - Fan Cultural Artefacts, Formations and Virtual Communities

> The nature of fan creation challenges the media industry's claims to hold copyrights on popular narratives. (Jenkins, 1992, p. 279)
>
> [F]ans often turn semiotic ... productivity into some form of textual production that can circulate among – and thus define – the fan community. (Fiske, 1992, p. 30)
>
> Opposition may be constituted by living, even momentarily within alternative practices, structures and spaces, even though they may take no notice of their relationship to existing systems of power. In fact, when one wins some space within a social formation, it has to be filled with something, presumedly something one cares for passionately.... And it is here that questions of desire and pleasure must be raised. (Grossberg, 1988, pp.169-170; cited in Jenkins, 1992, p. 283)

As outlined previously, Gomez is not the author of the text popularly and culturally known as Scott Gomez. Rather our knowledge of Gomez, like sport and the world more generally, is formed through a number of discourses, not least by those disseminated by the media. Yet, mediated Gomez is also somewhat challenged through the poaching practices on display across the fan netzines. Arguably, the constructions of both websites in different ways are representative of Jenkins' (1992) TV fan writings, which in turn are considered as "interpretative practice[s] of the fan community" (p. 156).

Fan culture across both sites offers some challenges to the media narratives, through the form and content of their representations of Gomez. Firstly, Gomez's story is inflected through the fan authors' focused emotional commitments to him alone. Secondly, both sites re-write Gomez through their interpretative practices of poetically mix-matching a number of narratives and images. Thirdly, the challenge comes from the detailed knowledge about Gomez's life. Both sites are a rich and specialised resource for Gomez fans across the world and arguably demonstrate a rich participatory culture. Lastly, the interpretative practices and specialised knowledge illustrated by both fan authors and posters suggest passionate identification with Gomez, which, as Grossberg (1988) ascertains, questions the power of the media to contain the meanings articulated to Gomez.

Like other websites, though different from the traditional fanzines that Jenkins (1992) addresses, both Gomez sites lend themselves for further fan raiding or textual poaching as embedded images (generally .JPEG, bitmap, PNG or GIF formats) can seamlessly be copied and transported elsewhere at the click of a mouse. Hence, arguably, the medium of the Internet has made the practice of textual poaching easier for fans and other groups of people, including academics.

In "doing things" with the various Gomez texts, the fans who maintain both websites, similar to Jenkins' (1992) TV fans, refuse: "mundane values and practices" via the "celebration of deeply held emotions and passionately embraced pleasures" (p. 283); and it is this emotional commitment that temporarily binds fans together in a community. One instance of such investment is illustrated by the official fan club's continual updates and maintenance of their site. More generally, however, given the absence of other fans' opinions from the official site, it remains difficult to follow through with Jenkins' (1992) suggestion of a socially interactive and interpretative fan community. Moreover, while both fan netzines maintain an emotional commitment to Gomez, the Guest Book postings on the unofficial site further indicate the strength of this attachment.

Mitra's (1996) discussion of imagining electronic or virtual communities also relies on postings to the soc.culture.indian bulletin board. The Internet for Mitra (1996) opens up new possibilities for community. Mitra (1996) reads the postings to the soc.culture.indian bulletin board as evidence of a participatory diasporic Indian communality, not bound to the boundaries and limitations imposed by traditional conceptions of community. For example, there is no Internet police "who determine who can go where and what can be said where" (Mitra, 1996, p. 62). For Mitra (1996) the Internet and *CMC* more generally permit the construction of imagined communities where shared culture, language, beliefs and practices are witnessed. Furthermore, Graham's (1999) discussion points out that virtual community's failure to disclose physical characteristics of people via face-to-face communication, unlike traditional considerations of community, may just entail that the Internet provides a freer forum for public discussion.

Comparably, Jenkins' (1992) idea of an interpretative fan community similarly involves a re-consideration of community more generally. This new form of community for Jenkins (1992) is: "formed by relations of consumption and categories of taste, and

discusses the role of folk music in creating a common identity for this geographically and socially dispersed group" (p. 2). Conceivably, Gomez's fans in posting to the Guest Book on Julie and Kelly's site are engaging in a dialogue with fellow fans. The similarity of their postings, suggest a kind of "commonality among strangers" that Jenkins (1992) addresses with reference to TV fans making music.

The postings Mitra (1996) details are from soc.culture.Indian. The postings from this bulletin board are somewhat more interactive than the Gomez fan postings. By interaction I mean fellow posters referring to one another in order to start a kind of dialogue. Only one posting from the ones reviewed within the time period under examination actively sought to "flame" or outrage other Gomez fans into a reaction:

Wednesday July 12, 2000 (4:03:40pm)
Craig Easton, Ontario

> Gomez had a great season, although I think if Fisher wouldn't have got injured he would have won the Calder :)

Although Craig includes within "his" post a link to the "First Mike Fisher Fan Page", "his" attempt to "flame" other Gomez fans receives no response. Moreover, none of the other posts actually engage or exchange with one another. Whereas the posters that Mitra (1996) details tend to dispute and support one another's comments. Gomez's fans' commonality, rather than explicitly taking place through active dialogue is thus implied through their identification with Gomez. Overwhelmingly, as I outlined above, the posters come together through treating Scott as a lust interest.

The unofficial Gomez postings do, however, echo Mitra's (1996) general comments that Internet discussion groups, chat rooms, and bulletin boards offer the posters freedom to express themselves. Yet, echoing Jenkins' (1992) commentary on fandom more generally, Gomez's fans do not just function within virtual fan cultures. Just like Jenkins' (1992) TV fans attending conventions for their favourite show, Gomez's fans more than likely watch him play either on the TV or at the stadium. Thus, fandom extends beyond the computer screen. In addition, fans exist within other communities with their fan status generally only enjoying a "weekend" status (Jenkins, 1992). Yet, rather than just offering temporary and transient tactics, approximating Jenkins (1992) TV fans who produce art, music and fanzines, Gomez's fans leave behind material traces of their

re-makings in the form of fan netzines and the electronic postings therein. These material traces and fan commonality challenge de Certeau's (1984) idea that textual poachers' manoeuvrings only offer temporary relief from the strategies of dominant culture/s.

My comments so far have followed the assumption that all surfers of the Gomez web sites are fans. However, Mitra (1996) nuances his discussion on virtual community by noting that not all surfers are members of the posting community. Mitra calls these disinterested surfers "lurkers". Jenkins (1992) too notes that not all TV watchers are fans. Rather just as many TV watchers are bystanders who remain quite indifferent to what they are viewing. Accordingly, not all surfers who enter the Gomez sites are fans that participate in wider Gomez fan community. Rather, some are disinterested lurkers, surfers or browsers.

Gomez fans probably surf across both the websites detailed within this chapter and thus the opposition I am setting up between official and unofficial fans is partially artificial. Yet, the information contained within both websites does indicate points of separation between official and unofficial fans. For example, whereas the unofficial fans, as demonstrated by the representation of Gomez throughout the site and within the postings more specifically, treat Gomez as a lust interest, the official site hails Gomez as an Alaskan hockey player. More generally, however, both sites display an amazing emotional investment in Gomez. The nuances I have highlighted throughout my analysis suggest a cross over (between "officialdom" and "fandom") and general fan plurality that is not particularly addressed by Jenkins' (1992) discussion on TV fans. I now turn to discuss some limitations to the arguments forwarded here.

5.33 - Limitations to the Utopic Claims of Virtual and Interpretative Fan Communities

No doubt, cyberspace permits new forms of communicative interaction (see for example: Woolley,1992; Mitra, 1996, Poster, 1990). Yet, Croteau and Hoynes (2000) also point out that the claims of agency over such networks as utopic, liberated zones, free from various bureaucracies that traditional forms of media are tied, are overstated. By way of explanation, they suggest that cyberspace has norms and rules that govern behaviour in cyberspace, and increasingly has a set of legal consequences for violators (Croteau and Hoynes, 2000, pp. 147-149). Hence, contrary to Mitra's (1996) assertions,

the Internet is increasingly policed. For example, the recent arrests in England of paedophile rings operating through a number of Internet sites are a case in point. The idea of policing could also be extended to issues of access. For example, if the official website's message board was operating, only paying fan club members would have access to the postings.

Other issues that limit some of the claims implied above, as I describe in more detail below, include: hypertext navigation on websites prescribe, and thus limit movement for surfers; similar to communities more generally, there remains access issues for joining Gomez's online fans; and potentially the proliferation of information about Gomez via the Internet may entail reduced public interest.

5.331 - Admittance into the Virtual Fan Community and the Politics of the Popular

Popular culture, as illustrated through these netzines, remains reliant on post-industrial capitalism, including the ubiquitous Microsoft, for its production and distribution. Access to both fan netzines requires a computer, a modem, an Internet provider and telephone line. Both websites also betray a certain amount of commercialism through advertising. This reflects Jenkins (1992) arguments that fanzines more generally have become increasingly commercial enterprises. The official site contains a number of commercial hypertext links. For example, within the Collectibles page there is link to http://www.gator.com, which is an online engine permitting users to compare prices of selected goods across the Internet. Kelly and Julie's site contains Yahoo/GeoCities advertisements on every page; although these advertisements enable them to enjoy free web hosting. Both fan netzines also indicate a degree of professionalism, which Jenkins (1992) notes is increasingly indicative of fanzines more generally.

Commercialism is more generally apparent on the official site, as payment is required to be in the official fan club of Scott Gomez. In addition, the official site sells a number of Gomez collectibles. Such collectibles generally appear with Gomez's autograph. Gomez's autograph has thus been turned into a commodity representative of dominant consumer culture. Following Horkheimer and Adorno's (1972) "culture industry" thesis, use-value in this case, identification with Gomez, has conceivably been transformed into something produced by the capitalist system. Yet, Gomez's autograph is not

always bought and sold and it remains a source of much popular pleasure and material proof of fans' commitment to Gomez.

Fan publishing, for Jenkins (1992), also retains relatively low barriers for entry: "[a]nyone who has access to a word processor, a copy center, and a few hundred dollars start-up cash can publish their own zine" (p. 158). Comparatively, the relative ease of setting up a site through companies like GeoCities that offer free web space, mean that fan publishing online is quite accessible. Yet, publishing, like admittance more generally, is still restricted to those who: own a computer with a modem, have specialized software, have an Internet provider and connected telephone line. Moreover, technical expertise remains a barrier for both would be web designers and surfers.

As detailed previously, more technical expertise, as Graham (1999) posits, can be traced onto the quality of website design. Given the design aptitude on display across both sites, the "official fans" that maintain the fan club netzine have greater access to technical expertise. The private web-hosting enjoyed by the official site, further implies greater financial commitment. The cultural and financial power enjoyed by the official site, following Graham's (1999) arguments, in turn may mean that this site enjoys more surfers than other Gomez fan sites. Hence, speculatively, future and current fans of Gomez will come together and converse only via this site, rejecting others.

Productively, whereas traditional fanzines face some commercial pressures – for example selling their zine to cover costs - fan netzines included here are not directly purchased. Conceivably, lack of interest from audiences is not a huge issue for fan netzines, especially given the access to free web-hosting facilities. The official site, whilst not demanding a fee to enter the site, does want to indirectly market Gomez memorabilia. Hence, through using the artefacts of mass culture and presenting their artefacts through the Internet, the Gomez zines, both incorporate some aspects of dominant culture and pose challenges to such culture.

5.332 - Establishing Order: Hypertext Navigation

Gomez's websites are connected together through a number of hypertext links. Clicking on hypertext links make for an interesting journey through cyberspace, connecting to disparate sites and users across the world. Moreover, Shields (2000) argues that

hypertext links enable a myriad of intertextual connections and as such: "break up the authorial control of texts and supplement and problematise what has been displayed or written" (p. 146). Shields (2000) furthers that hypertext links are central to understanding not only the navigation of the Internet, but also the constitution of websites. Yet, hypertext links also prescribe users' movements in advance. For example, search engines recognise and prioritise some websites above others, which sets certain limits to cybersurfing. One may also ask, what information is made salient and what is not? How are fans practices', including the construction of virtual communities limited by such restrictions? So, although, Barwell and Bowles (2000) positively stress that the Internet more generally is a non-hierarchical form of communication, resisting control by one organisation, it conceivably remains a structured space.

As demonstrated by the above, the hypertext links enable navigation both within this site to the various pages, and to other sites across the Internet. Following such links demonstrate not only the ordering and prescription of users' movements across the Internet, but the proliferation of information available which means that tracing all connections is an impossible task. This impossibility of knowing every intertextual connection is somewhat comparable to trying to understand a textbook that contains a number of implicit and explicit references. The Internet does however provide a more colourful and hallucinogenic journey. However, although brightly coloured-moving text and images appear across both Gomez websites, both remain framed by the linear lines provided by a computer screen.

Both fan netzines prescribe user movement by the order of their hypertext links. As detailed above, the official site's first link is to the "Fan Club" and although this is not very surprising since the site describes itself as "The Official Scott Gomez Fan Club" zine, this ordering arguably biases surfers to this page first. Of course, this page details the cost of membership, which seemingly any self-respecting fan would want, and a picture link to the online shop. Commercial interests are thus prioritised for fan surfers.

5.333 - Too Much Information?

Graham (1999) points out that the Internet provides unprecedented scope for the presentation of opinion, including the identification with a celebrated athlete like Scott Gomez. Yet, like the proliferation of television channels, similarly to the growing number of websites on a number of athletes also means arguably that the public attention that each can hope to command has been reduced.

5.4 - Singular Scott?

As articulated within these fan netzines, Scott Gomez does not have a singular meaning either for those who produce or consume him. Reading this chapter alongside Chapter 4, underscores just how differently the mass media apparatus take up Gomez compared to some fans. To re-iterate: Scott, through different tactics and strategies is articulated by different contexts, to multiple discourses for a number of different folks. Tracing how fans do and do not reproduce mediated Scott, suggests his popular imaginings exceed MediaSport delivery.

Gomez's *cybersport* fans, as detailed in this chapter need more examination and much of my commentary remains speculative and exploratory; but productively my story has extrapolated Jenkins' (1992) ethnographic study of TV fans onto the cyber traces left by Gomez's fans. Just as Jenkins' (1992) media fan study demands for a re-assessment of TV audiences more generally, arguably my study on *cybersport* fans demands for a re-consideration of sport fans, spectators and audiences.

Notes

[1] Jenkins (1992) does very briefly discuss an online Twin Peaks discussion group that enable "netters" to engage with one another, for example by exchanging video tapes or through simply swapping insights about the television series (see pp. 77-79).
[2] See my discussion in Chapter 2.
[3] I encourage my readers to follow my navigation of this site and Kelly and Julie's site, by going online.
[4] The authorship of this entire site, as I detail in the description of the site, also appears as AK's Wright Design and Web Disgn [sic] Alaska.
[5] All grammar, punctuation, spelling and so on reflects its appearance on the website.
[6] The jpeg image shown of the website included in my project, is a recent retrieval (August, 2001) and only includes nine hypertext links. During the period of my research (June 1998-July 2000), however, there was indication of a Message Board, which though was never up and running, made up ten, not nine hypertext links for Scott's fan surfers.
[7] http://www.sports.excite.com/nhl/njd/latest_NJ.headlines+results

[8] See: http://www.latinosportslegends.com This website contains at least 6 detailed articles on Gomez's career during my period of research (June 1998 – July 2000). During this time the site only detailed the successes of certain Latino men, but quite recently the website included recognition of the "Latina" Hall of Fame golfer, Nancy Lopez. Nancy Lopez, however, is not included in "The Latino Legends" wall of fame, which remains wholly andocentric.

[9] http://www.wunderground.com/US/AK/Anchorage.html

[10] See http://www.geocities.com/sgomez23-2000/index.html; http://www.geocities.com/scott23gomez/ and http://www.geocites.com/tif1723/index.htm

[11] The same prescription of movement by hypertext links discussed with reference to the official website also apply to this website too.

[12] http://www.geocites.com/tif1723/index.htm

[13] http: //www.sportsillustrated.cnn.com/thenetwork/news/2000/02/21/cnnsicomprofile_Gomez/

[14] Some postings are sent as "private", which means that although they appear as present on the site, the information contained within them is only accessible to the web authors.

[15] This post not only informed the fan designers about my project, but, asked to use some of the Gomez photographs and images for my conclusion to my project. As I have not received a reply to this request images from this site that the authors expressively ask not to be poached are not used.

[16] All grammar, punctuation, spelling and so on reflects its appearance on the website. I also use the original Tahoma font type in order to separate my commentary from the postings.

[17] However, as I do not know the time zone for the times kept within this website, my comments are somewhat tentative.

[18] This is a speculative assertion with specific regards to the websites discussed in this project, as neither site contains hit counters. Hit counters, usually appearing on the front page, assess the amount of users who have entered a particular website.

PART THREE : I REDO

CHAPTER 6 : BY WAY OF CONCLUSION...

I should like this work to read as an open site. Many questions are laid out on it that have not yet found answers; and many of the gaps refer either to earlier works or to others that have not yet been completed, or even begun. (Foucault, 1994, p. xii)

Figure 6.1: The Website

many thanx to...
Message Board
Ch3: textual strategies + tactics
"daring" Scott – Sport fans + textual poacher reframes
Ch4: illuminating Scott games 3 media narratives as an athlete hero
abstrdCt
reference links
review alt-Ch2: Publicising the hero
about me
Ch1: introduction
My thesis or storythingy* looks at the popular imagining of Scott Gomez across a number of print-media and fan websites. My storythingy critiques the various representations of Gomez, but my website adds to the ways of doing Scott. The aim of my final chapter, which is also THIS PAGE, is do redo my project by making it available in cyberspace. Please send feedback via the Message Board. This website reflects my desire to take popular culture, and fans more specifically, seriously. For an overview of my project - see Chapter 1.
*Storythingy was the name given to the ongoing nightmare of my thesis by my friend Feesters.
by Debra Capon, 2001©.
Email me: dac_storythingy@hotmail.com.

Source: http://www.daconline.freeuk.com

The text starts a life of its own as soon as you let it out of your hands. (Alasuuatari, 1995, p. 192)

Innumerable ways of playing and foiling the other's game (*jouer / dejouer le jeu de l'autre*), that is, the space instituted by others, characterize the subtle, stubborn, resistant activity of groups which, since they lack their own space, have to get along in a network of already established forces and representations. People have to make do with what they have. (De Certeau, 1984, p. 18)

My original desire was to leave the front page of my website as my conclusion. However, as my committee pointed out, perhaps leaving the gaps, or at least not naming them, and referring to works not yet completed is not a project for now.[1] Instead, I would like to draw some threads together in the hope of making my project more meaningful for my readers.

My project started life as an examination of contemporary heroism through the body of a hockey player, yet ended up being a struggle to try and develop an adequate theoretical means to approach the various texts concerning Scott Gomez. Partially this struggle represents my own restlessness as a scholar that meant that I unwisely read too broadly and examined too many texts. Yet, partially this struggle also concerns representation. For example, in (re-) presenting Scott: what means do we use to read the texts? Where do we start and when do we stop? Given the narratives and images, what stories can we tell about Scott? Throughout my examination of the various Gomez texts, I attempted to react to the narratives, that is, to make some sense of the practices used to represent Scott. I considered such representational practices through de Certeau's (1984) idea of strategies and tactics of power. As discussed, both the print-media and fans, although often using the same facts and images, represent Scott in different ways. Whereas, the *NYT* consider Scott as a Hispanic star, the *ADN* and official website hail him as an Anchorage and Alaskan hero, while the unofficial website predominantly constructs him as an object of fan pleasure.

My interest in fandom attempted to highlight how people make do and receive heroes and celebrities over and above examining the individual hero. Both my interest in representation more generally and subsequent examination of online cultures of fandom actually meant that the question of the hero became sidelined and decentred by the end of my thesis. Examining fans and their artefacts turned my attention from the individual hero to the social production of fandom and hero identification. Following through with some of the communication theorists highlighted in Chapter 2, arguably means that there is no discernible difference between naming fans' interest in Scott as that of fan identification or hero worship. Hence, arguably Scott's status as hero/celebrity is interchangeable

through considering online fan culture. As I address more fully below, both the fans and the print-media narratives make Scott meaningful in a number of ways and arguably the construction of him as a hero is just one of these meaning-making processes.

Although my project used a wide body of theoretical material in order to make meaning out of the various Gomez texts, the nexus of power-representation-culture remained salient throughout. Yet, on reading across the texts, my work turned into two mini-projects. Firstly, the stories I told about the print-media drew on post-colonial studies (specifically Fanon and Said), various works by Stuart Hall and Anzaldúa's *borderlands*. Given the history of US relations with Mexico and the continual economic and cultural effects of this association, arguably, post-colonial studies, as well as Chicano/a theory more narrowly has much to offer in trying understand this relationship. For example, people of Mexican descent and other Spanish-speaking people with the US more generally are continually excluded from the American "we". Arguably, such exclusion is apparent across the print-media representations of Gomez.

The story of Gomez's father crossing the Mexico border for work was a story re-iterated throughout the print-media texts. As detailed, Gomez himself bemoaned the fact that he is continually constructed as a recent immigrant across the border. My discussion further highlighted the use of the American Dream narrative in the Gomez story. Yet, Gomez's making it is prescribed through a number of strategies that seemingly prevent his full acceptance either as an American citizen or a NHL hockey player. Recent NHL history has excluded men of colour from its ranks and the construction of Gomez as a non-domestic and Hispanic star (see the *NYT's* narratives) serve to reinforce that he does not quite belong across a number of registers. In briefly looking at recent US immigration law alongside the historical whiteness of the NHL, I wanted to place Gomez's body in a context that emphasised his continual out-of-placeness. Although, as I indicated, this non-belonging and marginality is complicated by the fact Scott remains a man making it in professional sports. In looking specifically at how the print-media make Gomez meaningful and cope with his plural differences, I noted the deployment

of a number of racist practices and strategies. Given such representation of Gomez I tried to think through how he is always already a migrant worker, continually crossing the border for work. My representational analysis of the print-media texts, although drawing on the use of metaphor (my construction of Gomez as a migrant worker, for example) and narrative form, hence is in some sense a poetical analysis, focused more on the strategies and politics of such representation.

Secondly, by examining the pleasures and poetics of fandom not only were questions around heroism sidelined, but some of the theory outlined in Chapter 3 also became redundant. For example, although I outlined the operation of post-colonial or "Hispanic-white" relations within my examination of the print-media narratives, my analysis of online fandom did not follow through which such consideration. I address this neglect below.

At the end of Chapter 3 I asked a series of questions that I would like to re-address again here. The first question I posed concerned whether the concepts of hero/celebrity were operating across all the texts. This question was more consistently addressed with reference to the print-media narrative compared to the websites. As detailed in Chapter 2, rather than assume in advance that Scott is by default a hero or celebrity I wanted to address how these concepts are operating within the narratives. To my knowledge, the websites never used either labels in describing Scott. Given the arguments of Turner et al. (2000) and Jenson (1992), Scott's celebrity and star status is implied through both netzines devoting their entire sites to discussing him. Through conferring Gomez with celebrity status, arguably, fans confer their own fan status by creating sites, surfing and leaving postings on the netzines. The absence of the words hero or celebrity means that my analysis really focuses on the question of fan culture, textual poaching and tactical practices employed by the authors and posters in identifying with Scott. If Mallory's comments in Chapter 4 are correct, that the hero is an individual who positively affects someone, then, Scott's hero status is also inferred across the sites. This positive affect however, is not equal between the sites. Reflecting the *ADN's* construction of Gomez, the official site considers Scott predominantly as a successful Alaskan hockey player, whereas, the unofficial site identifies with

Scott as a desirable hockey player. Such constructions suggest different types of fandom exhibited between the two sites. Hence, arguably hero/celebrity are differently and implicitly in operation within the websites.

The second question asked whether the media and fan narratives were comparable in their representation of Scott. As I addressed above, the narratives make Scott meaningful in a myriad of ways. By doing so, Scott is identified as a hero and a celebrity through a network of different discourses including masculinity, femininity, heterosexuality, Alaskaness, Hispanicness and so on. I further argued that Scott's presence in the media marked his existence as a continual border crosser and migrant worker. Yet, my project's silence around Scott's Chicano identity across both websites highlights both an absence of this being explicitly addressed through the Internet and the kinds of questions I subsequently asked around such representations. The official site, like the *ADN*, does explicitly consider Scott's Alaskaness at the relegation of his Chicano identity. Arguably this relegation is more telling than the fan tactics of desire indicated through the content of the unofficial site. Conceivably, just as my discussion in Chapter 5 looked at the issue of reading gender online, such relegation requires questions around how race and ethnicity are also represented through the medium of the Internet. This questioning leads me into my third question around the issues of the *borderlands* and colonialism – as just how salient is this question with reference to the fan narratives? My decision to focus on the construction of fan culture actually led to the neglect of tackling this question. Arguably issues of race and postcolonialism are not as easily addressed with reference to online fan culture. Tellingly however the relative silence about Gomez's Chicano ethnicity reflects who designs such netzines and the interests they have about Gomez, together with the issue of who has access to such resources. Again this is not to say that Gomez can ever be fully represented, just that given the other constructions of him – what is highlighted and what is left out, marks the politics of representation across the websites.

In identifying with Scott, both websites extend the media representations in a number of ways. For example both sites mix-match facts, images and narra-

tives detailing Scott and his life. Following Jenkins (1992) assertions, though at odds with his dismissal of sport fans, the fandom demonstrated across the sites are comparable to his description of TV textual poachers. Yet, the official and unofficial Scott, do indicate different levels of fan culture. For example, the idea that such *cybersport* fan culture could foster a kind of interpretative and virtual community was demonstratively indicated only with reference to the unofficial site through its guest book postings. In addition, given Jenkins' (1992) arguments around fandom and textual poaching, perhaps the official site through its mirroring of the *ADN's* construction of Gomez and its authorized status, means that it is neither an instance of fandom or textual poaching. Alternatively, as I indicated within Chapter 5, perhaps the official site just demonstrates different levels to fandom and textual poaching. With reference to the former, the official Gomez site enjoys more institutional backing and authority than the unofficial site – yet, does this necessarily mean that it is not an instance of fan culture? With reference to the latter, the official site whilst mirroring the *ADN's* construction of Gomez does so through a different forum, incorporating a number of other images and narratives. This indicates that are some forms of re-presentation of Scott going on across the official site, thus textual poaching activity. I do not propose any hard answers to the questions raised here, rather I want to highlight the points of intersection and divergences between the types of fan cultures on display across both websites.

My fourth question concerned the practices deployed across the narratives to represent Scott. Fan tactics, including the use of first person and conceivably a more feminine and intimate narrative, together with media strategies, including racist practices and the repetitive use of the American Dream and border crossing narratives, indicate different ways of knowing Scott. After de Certeau (1984), the print-media strategically enjoys more (institutionalised) space than the websites yet after Jenkins (1992) and my examination of Internet Gomez fans, tactics deployed by fans through the construction of websites, do provide some evidence of taking up space, rather than just time. Although the Internet and website construction more specifically is increasingly becoming an important communication

medium, the traditional mass-media still retains the upper hand on disseminating their version of sport across the PSI.

Which brings me to my last question: the struggle for/in popular culture. By doing and re-making Scott the websites differently reinforce and depart from the media representations. Departure is mainly secured by the sites' sole devotion to Scott. Reinforcement, as I have already described above, is mainly given by the official site's construction of Scott as an Alaskan hockey player, which mirrors his appreciation in the *ADN*.

Reading across the fan netzines and print-media serve to indicate that Scott is pushed and pulled, made meaningful in a number of ways. By seeking to trace the politics and poetics of representation, through examining both the media strategies and fan tactics, my desire to examine contemporary heroism went awry. Yet, the differences between the representations of Gomez across the texts hope to point out that the salient area of enquiry for studying heroism today requires not just an engagement with the cult of the celebrity and the mass-media more generally, but demands a glance at how fans make-do with such individuals. As I asked before – be like Scott? Well, that depends on which Scott "we" are speaking about.

NOTES

[1] My comments in this section reflect questions and issues raised by my committee in the oral defence of my project. I would like to thank again, Debra, Dave, Gamal and Lisa, for their respectful and attentive questions during this process.

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